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New York

President: Mr. Ping .... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, late head of State of the Principality of Monaco

The President (*spoke in French*): I have the sad duty to pay tribute to the late head of State of the Principality of Monaco, His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, who passed away this morning, Wednesday, 6 April 2005.

During his reign, His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III enabled the Principality of Monaco to experience prosperity and gain a reputation as a modern State in the aftermath of the Second World War through economic and social development, for the benefit of the population of Monaco, thereby earning the affection of his people and the esteem of the entire world. Prince Rainier also represented and affirmed, steadfastly and skilfully, the personality of the Principality of Monaco during his reign, which lasted for almost 56 years.

We are grateful to him for his profound belief in multilateral diplomacy and for his support for the endeavours and actions of the United Nations. His political vision and determination facilitated Monaco's evolution on the international scene, enabling it to become, in 1993, a Member of the United Nations.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of the Principality of Monaco to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of the Principality of Monaco, as well as to the bereaved family of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Malawi, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Chimphamba (Malawi): On behalf of the African Group, I would like to make a few remarks this afternoon on the passing away of Prince Rainier III.

Oceanographers, environmentalists and the scientific world at large are deeply saddened by the passing on, on Wednesday, 6 April 2005, of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco, an important figure in international development. We all know that Prince Rainier efficiently continued the fruitful work of his grandfather, Prince Albert I, whose discoveries in the fields of oceanography and palaeontology won him a great reputation in scientific circles throughout the world. It is important to highlight that in the 1950s oceanography in the Mediterranean made rapid progress and ardently galvanized the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea to take up its activities under the direction of Prince Rainier as President, on 15 September 1956.

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As President of the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea, Prince Rainier encouraged that important body to set up a specialized committee to combat marine pollution. His deep concern about the question of the environment and marine pollution also led to the creation of the scientific centre that took part in the international movement Atoms for Peace.

His accomplishments in the development of the Principality of Monaco are highly commendable, a useful contribution to humanity and international development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Bhutan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan): We are greatly saddened by the passing away this morning of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco. We join the people of Monaco as they mourn this great national loss. Deeply respected by his people and the world community, His Serene Highness will be remembered for his tireless efforts and able leadership in the transformation of Monaco into a modern and dynamic State.

On behalf of the Member States of the Asian Group, and on my own behalf, I would like to convey our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the members of the ruling family and the people and Government of the Principality of Monaco.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Estonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): It is with deep sadness and sorrow that we learned about the passing away of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco. Prince Rainier was the leader of his people and country during the more than 55 years of his reign. He fulfilled his duties with extraordinary strength until the end. We pay great respect to his dedication in serving his country, which was admired throughout the world. Prince Rainier was an outstanding figure whose tireless work left a legacy of a prosperous and stable country. He will be truly missed. We share our profound compassion and affection with the family of Prince Rainier and the people of Monaco during this difficult time.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): The countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Group join with the international community in conveying to the royal family of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco, to the Government and people of Monaco and to its delegation at the United Nations our heartfelt condolences on his passing away today, 6 April 2005.

Monaco, one of Europe's oldest dynasties, celebrated 700 years of Grimaldi reign in 1997. For 56 years it has been marked with the imprint of Prince Rainier, who up until today had been Europe's longest-serving monarch.

Prince Rainier is credited with modernizing the Principality and building it into a prosperous banking and financial centre. He introduced new policies that would usher in a period of renovation aimed at making the Principality a modern State looking towards the future while preserving its traditions. His work focused on expanding the Principality's economy by continuing to attract investment and to rely less on traditional sources of income.

Prince Rainier was a strong advocate of close cooperation between nations and encouraged the membership of Monaco in several international organizations, including the United Nations, of which it became a member on 28 May 1993. As we will all recall, Monaco has been the headquarters of the International Hydrographic Organization — formerly the International Hydrographic Bureau — since 1921.

Prince Rainier was also responsible for promulgating the Principality's new constitution, in 1962, which resulted in a sharing of power with a national council of 18 elected members.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean join with the family of Prince Rainier and with the Government and people of the Principality of Monaco in celebrating the life and in mourning the passing of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): As Chairman of the Western European and other States Group, I would like to extend my deepest condolences and sympathies to the princely family and to the people of the Principality of Monaco on the passing of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

Prince Rainier III, who enjoyed a long and successful reign, will be remembered for the fundamental way in which he transformed his country. He launched infrastructure projects, he promoted the establishment of high-tech industries, and he contributed to the development of the tourism industry, to take just a few examples.

A memorable occasion in his efforts to reinforce the role of Monaco in world affairs was the admission of the Principality as a State Member of the United Nations by this General Assembly in 1993. Therefore, the tribute we pay to him here today has a special significance. He was a true friend of the United Nations, but he will be remembered first and foremost for the love and respect he inspired in his people and across the globe.

On this day of great loss, he and those he left behind will be in our thoughts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the United States, speaking on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): On behalf of the United States Government and the American people, I extend my deepest sympathy to the ruling family and the people of the Principality of Monaco upon the passing of Prince Rainier III.

Prince Rainier III will be remembered as a beloved leader of his people and a devoted husband and father. Single-handedly, with great vision and determination, he transformed a small principality into a dynamic business centre and a leading tourist destination. His vision for a vibrant Monaco included not just increased economic vigour, but also a greater presence on the international stage. That included his decision to seek membership for his nation in this Organization and in the Council of Europe. For that reason, we also extend our sympathy to our colleagues from Monaco.

Prince Rainier was a staunch ally and valued friend of my nation. Americans remember him fondly, however, not only for his friendship and good will towards the United States, but also because of a special personal tie. His marriage to the American-born Grace Patricia Kelly — Princess Grace — helped create for him and his family a special place in our hearts.

We join all those who mourn that wise man, a prince who gave selflessly of himself to his country throughout a long and distinguished reign. We share in the mourning of his family and countrymen and pray that they will find consolation in his formidable legacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Turkey, speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): It was with great sadness that we learned this morning of the passing away of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco. As the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) group at the United Nations, I would like to express, on behalf of our member States, my deepest sympathies to the family of the late Prince, the people of Monaco, as well as colleagues and friends at the mission of Monaco here in New York.

His Serene Highness Prince Rainer was a visionary, an exemplary statesman, a reformer and a modernizer. As a dignified representative of his country, he was always regarded with high esteem and affection within the international community.

On this solemn occasion, I would like to convey once again the heartfelt condolences of the member States of the OIC to the bereaved family of His Serene Highness, as well as to the people of Monaco.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the Principality of the Monaco.

Mr. Borghini (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, the princely family, and the Government and people of the Principality of Monaco, I thank you very warmly, Sir; the Permanent Representatives of Bhutan, Estonia, Malawi, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago, who spoke in their capacities as Chairmen of the regional groups; the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, speaking on behalf of the host country; and the Permanent Representative of Turkey, speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, for their kind tributes to the memory of our late and deeply regretted Prince Rainier III.

The emotion raised by his passing is commensurate with the popularity that he earned over the 56 years of his reign, not only among the people of Monaco and residents of the Principality, but also among many heads of State and Government, the leaders of international organizations and the citizens of the world, irrespective of their position, beliefs and age.

In the Principality and far beyond, Prince Rainier III was the fount of innovative and beneficial initiatives, thanks to the visionary qualities that enabled him to give a decisive impetus to the expansion of Monaco from the very first years of his reign, and tirelessly to ensure that our country has been able to adjust to the many challenges that have arisen since his accession in 1949.

Furthermore and above all, he oversaw the development of the Principality in security. Aware of the importance of preserving the environment and our quality of life, the Prince was personally involved in protecting the natural environment, the Mediterranean in particular. He actively participated in the Rio Conference and its follow-ups.

Finally, His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III was vigorously determined to see the Principality join all major international bodies, especially the United Nations and, more recently, the Council of Europe. We recall here the great importance that the Prince of Monaco attached to the admission of his country to our Organization. Having fought in the Second World War, he was convinced of the crucial and central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

Having established a new Constitution in 1962, the Prince sought its amendment in 2002 by strengthening all aspects underpinning the rule of law. The progress achieved in the areas of human rights, international humanitarian cooperation and universal protection of abused children is a very important aspect of the Prince's life's work. I cannot fail to acknowledge, either, his work to affirm solidarity with the most vulnerable.

The fact that Prince Rainier III was known as the "Builder Prince" is an allusion not only to the urban transformation of Monaco, whose territory was peacefully extended by land reclamation from the sea, but also and above all to his placing his country on the lasting and solid foundations of moral values, law and justice — values which his successor, Prince Albert II, also embraces.

It was therefore with great sadness but immense gratitude for his work that the people of Monaco learned of the passing of their Prince. Nevertheless, confident of their future, they fully support Prince Albert II.

Agenda items 45 and 55 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005)

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me start by expressing, on behalf of Pakistan, our deep condolences on the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and on the demise of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

Mr. President, I thank you for convening this important meeting. We admire the manner in which you are leading the process of preparations for the high-level event of the General Assembly in September. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for submitting to the General Assembly his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

The Pakistan delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Malaysia as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Jamaica as the Chair of the Group of 77 and China.

Today, we are starting the second stage of our preparations for September's high-level event. We have, in the first stage, already expressed our positions on issues of peace and security and development, in response to the reports of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and of the Millennium Project. We have now received the Secretary-General's long-awaited report. In this debate, and in the subsequent meetings outlined in your road map, Sir, we shall be obliged to reiterate many of the same views and positions that have already been expressed in our previous informal discussions, specially since — as noted by the Chairmen of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and of the Group of 77 — many of our views have not found reflection in the Secretary-General's report.

Much has been said about the self-evident reality that peace and development are mutually interdependent. Let us remember that the complete quotation from the Charter, part of which is used in the title of the Secretary-General's report, is: "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". Indeed, the September summit was originally designed to review mainly the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. For the vast majority of Member States, perhaps the most serious deficit of the Secretary-General's report is its failure to clearly spell out a plan of action to implement the agreed development goals, beyond endorsing the welcome recommendations of the Millennium Project report — the Sachs report — for increasing official development assistance, providing debt relief and open market access for the poorest countries and implementing some quick wins. The September summit will be a failure, from our perspective, if it does not include clear commitments to at least the following.

The summit must include a commitment to the creation of an equitable and development-oriented international trading system. Summit leaders cannot leave this to World Trade Organization negotiators.

It must include a commitment on changes to make international financial and economic governance more equitable and more supportive of development goals.

It must address the endemic problems related to commodities and promote measures for the generation of universal employment.

In the area of peace and security, the Secretary-General's report has not only endorsed but further accentuated a concept of collective security that is conceived as an instrument of coercion and intervention rather than of the universal cooperation and harmonization that are the underlying spirit of the United Nations Charter. It endorses the undue concentration of authority in the Security Council. That concept would result in legitimizing and reinforcing the pervasive inequality — in terms of security, power and wealth — that characterizes our times and which the United Nations must dedicate itself to rectifying.

The report's recommendations relating to the use of force and to Articles 42 and 51 of the Charter illustrate that point. Under the Charter, the central purpose of the United Nations is to prevent, not facilitate, the use of force and military intervention. Yet, the report spells out so-called criteria for the authorization of force that are subjective and that could be misused, mostly by powerful States against weaker States. Furthermore, going even against the High-level Panel's caution against reinterpretation of Article 51, the report's analysis and recommendations open the door to the pre-emptive, and even preventive, use of force.

The endorsement of the so-called "responsibility to protect" would steer the United Nations along the same interventionist path. The big and powerful States, not small and weaker ones, will decide where and when to intervene to protect people at risk. International law, especially humanitarian law, already provides the basis for the international community to protect peoples subjected to gross violations of human rights and to genocide. In Rwanda, Srebrenica and elsewhere, it was the failure of political will that prevented action, not the absence of an interventionist doctrine.

Pakistan is at the forefront in the war on terrorism. We would welcome the conclusion of a convention on nuclear terrorism. We agree that a comprehensive strategy is required to combat terrorism, but such a strategy must be clear, equitable and realistic. Everyone can agree that wanton violence against innocent civilians constitutes terrorism, and that must be so whether it is perpetrated by non-State actors or State actors. Of course, the category of civilians does not include armed forces suppressing or occupying peoples, and individual acts of terrorism cannot in themselves delegitimize legitimate movements for self-determination and national liberation. Nor can the root causes of terrorism, including foreign occupation, denial of self-determination and political and economic injustices, all be brushed under the carpet in any effective counter-terrorism strategy.

The recommendations on weapons of mass destruction are partial and incomplete. The first priority remains to achieve nuclear disarmament and the effective prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Non-proliferation must be promoted in tandem with disarmament. Arms control — global and regional — is essential to offer equal security to all States.

There are also some significant omissions in the report. It does not fully address the most important and existing threats to peace arising from foreign occupation, denial of self-determination, territorial disputes, interventionist policies and the excessive accumulation of increasingly lethal conventional and non-conventional armaments. Nor is the troubled relationship between Islam and the West addressed in the report.

While seeking "to make the most far-reaching reforms in the history of the United Nations" — as stated in the paragraph 2 of the report — the report does not fully focus on building on the major strengths of the United Nations system: the enlargement of the treaty-making role of the General Assembly; the empowerment of the international judicial system, especially the International Court of Justice; the considerable scope for action, under Chapter VI, for the pacific settlement of disputes; and the capacity of the United Nations for coordination of international development assistance and for global humanitarian relief.

We agree that it is essential to adjust and adapt the intergovernmental as well as Secretariat structures of the United Nations to the realities, challenges and opportunities of our times.

The General Assembly's authority and role under the Charter must be restored. The rationalization of the Assembly's agenda and working methods can help in that process. But the central issue is a political decision to halt and reverse the encroachment by the Security Council on the Assembly's functions and prerogatives.

Appropriate measures to enhance the role of the Economic and Social Council — as the central policy and coordination organ in the economic and social fields — are also overdue. Some of us are working to achieve this. If Charter amendments are to be envisaged, we should consider a change — making the decisions of the Economic and Social Council binding on Member States, as are the decisions of the Security Council.

We support the proposal for the creation of a new Peacebuilding Commission. It should be mandated to deal with all stages of complex conflicts: conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict peacebuilding. It should be created by the General Assembly and report to both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Its role should be advisory in nature. Its membership should include all major actors involved in addressing specific crises.

The proposal to create a new Human Rights Council appears to be a counter-intuitive answer to addressing the complex and controversial problems relating to the United Nations approach to human rights. In our judgement, it will be difficult to realize this proposal. There are, however, simpler and more effective avenues by which the consideration by, and action of, the United Nations of human rights issues can be made more effective and equitable. My delegation hopes to advance some suggestions on this during our debate under the relevant cluster.

It is a matter of concern that deep differences persist on the issue of Security Council reform. They threaten to overwhelm the entire reform agenda. If a partisan model reflecting the ambitions of a few large States is put to a vote, as they have indicated, it could derail the entire process of United Nations reform. It would be wise to realize a comprehensive reform of the Security Council by building a general consensus for a model that accommodates the legitimate interests and aspirations of all States, reflects current global realities and enhances the representativeness and effectiveness of the Security Council. A group of like-minded countries is seeking to unite to promote such a consensus. These efforts deserve the support of all Member States, of the Secretary-General, and of the President of the General Assembly.

It is also obvious that adjustments in the policies and institutions of the United Nations will require appropriate changes in the Secretariat. Such changes must await, not precede, the intergovernmental decisions. While much of the recent media criticism against the United Nations and the Secretary-General is unfair and uninformed, there are several improvements which can and should be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat. My delegation will offer some concrete suggestions in the near future, including on issues such as personnel policies, staff buyouts, the hiring of consultants, accountability and efficiency.

The success of the September summit will depend very substantially on clarity regarding its outcome, the preparatory process and the method of decision-making. Mr. President, Pakistan endorses your indication that we will adopt a final document which will reflect a balanced consensus on all major issues. We do not like cherry-picking. But we can only harvest fruit which is ripe and ready. Early harvests are often bitter harvests.

Mr. President, we also endorse your commitment to conduct an open, transparent and inclusive process of preparations for the summit. We must underline the fact that the outcome must be an openly negotiated document, not one produced only through bilateral or plurilateral consultations.

Finally, it is also evident that, if we are to produce a "new consensus" for the new global order and a revitalized United Nations, such a "new consensus" must be achieved by consensus. It is disingenuous for some to imagine that they could force votes on certain issues but insist on consensus on others. One vote will lead to a series of votes. It could produce a mixed bag of results that could further erode the image and relevance of the United Nations and create a new world order marked by controversy and conflict rather than by cooperation and collective action.

Let us choose the course of wisdom. Let us not seek partisan solutions or impose arbitrary deadlines. Let us unite for consensus. Let us make a real effort to create a United Nations that responds to the interests and aspirations of all the peoples of the United Nations.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to express our deep condolences to the Observer of the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness the Pope John Paul II, a lifelong man of peace and proponent of dialogue. I should like also to express to the Permanent Representative of Monaco our most sincere condolences on the passing of Prince Rainier III, who left so deep a mark on his country's history.

While we fully subscribe to the statements made this morning by the Chairmen of the African Group, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, I should like to make the following general comments on the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom: development, security and human rights for all".

I should like first of all to note that the Organization is now at a crossroads. Since the submission of the High-level Panel's report to the Secretary-General, the Organization's situation has deteriorated considerably. There has been in increase in the number of scandals, underscoring grave structural weaknesses, dysfunction and serious management problems within the Secretariat. This has tarnished the image and credibility of the Organization. The Organization is therefore quite sick, and requires treatment appropriate to its illness. To all indications, the report of the Secretary-General is not the expected treatment, and certainly not the panacea that some had expected, or that some are trying to make it out to be.

Presented as a coherent whole — a sort of grand bargain in which all would find a solution to their problems: development for the countries of the South, security for the countries of the North and human rights for all — the report of the Secretary-General does at times provide good solutions, but it sometimes leaves us wanting, when it does not completely disappoint us. Its section entitled "Freedom from want" no doubt contains a number of well-directed recommendations. It also includes the long-awaited proposal, on which we are all focusing, to establish a timetable for the incremental increase of official development assistance (ODA), with a view to attaining the target of 0.7 per cent by 2015. That proposal is of course welcome. However, as put forth, I fear it will above all benefit countries that have adopted strategies to reach the Millennium Development Goals at an accelerated pace, and will therefore benefit less the poorest countries that do not have the means to implement their national development strategies. Similarly, the idea of launching the International Finance Facility in 2005 on the basis of ODA is a good proposal, so long as it supports ODA and does not replace it. Lastly, as suggested by the Sachs report, the implementation of "quick wins" that are effective while not being excessively onerous is also undeniably a very good proposal that we should all support.

That being said, I am not convinced about the approach adopted by the Secretary-General's report, as it is based solely on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In a way, that is a sort of "minimum wage": an attempt to meet the basic economic and social needs of the countries of the South while reducing development issues solely to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. That is clearly a mistake. Much more serious than that, however, is the fact that in referring to sustainable development the report does so only through the perspective of the environment, thereby ignoring aspects related to development, health and education. In addition, the report is truly problematic in that it addresses superficially, or outright fails to mention, such important problems as foreign debt — which is given short shrift — access to markets, technology transfers, the strengthening of national capacity, private direct investment flows and, in particular, reform of the international financial architecture, namely, the Bretton Woods institutions. Moreover, the same observations also apply vis-à-vis Africa. The report emphasizes Africa's importance, but it offers no more than a single concrete recommendation aimed at effectively supporting the continent's development efforts.

With regard to the report's section entitled "Freedom from fear", I would like to make an observation on the subject of non-proliferation and disarmament. Although the report does contain some good recommendations, we find it regrettable that the appeal to nuclear Powers addresses only reductions in non-strategic nuclear weapons and does not mention the unequivocal commitment undertaken in the General Assembly Hall at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by the five nuclear Powers to work towards the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

With regard to access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and under the pretext of "tension" (*A/59/2005, para. 99*) surrounding that matter, the Secretary-General proposes that the market for fissile materials be regulated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — whereas, let us recall, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change called for a reduction in the supply of fissile materials. In either case the countries concerned would nevertheless face unjustifiable restrictions incompatible with the NPT.

We are even more surprised at the hasty blessing given by the Secretary-General to an initiative undertaken outside the United Nations whose legal basis and operational effectiveness have not been established: the Proliferation Security Initiative. Of course, the Secretary-General's blessing cannot commit the Organization or its Member States. Far from it.

Lastly, with regard to a concern we all fully share in connection with the widespread availability of high-precision ballistic delivery systems and portable models that could be used for terrorist purposes, and also in connection with the proposal that the Security Council adopt a resolution on the matter, we believe that, if we are truly going to take this risk seriously, entrusting the question to the Security Council would weaken the existing multilateral intergovernmental framework and would give the Security Council legislative powers not conferred upon it by the Charter.

I would now like to address the issue of terrorism. In his report, the Secretary-General proposes a comprehensive strategy to address that threat, based on five pillars. We find that proposal generally acceptable. However, we believe that the rationale for the first pillar — namely, dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it — is not very concrete, given that the report of the Secretary-General has completely obscured the underlying causes of the evil of terrorism and thereby the need to eradicate them. We believe that in order to deprive those who are tempted to use terror — be they States, groups or individuals — of any political, ideological, religious or other pretext to seek to justify or legitimize their actions, we must simply find responses and solutions to such very real problems as foreign occupation, repression, social injustice, lack of freedom, extreme poverty, despair, frustration and religious and political extremism, all of which provide the breeding ground from which terrorism draws its strength.

The solutions to those problems are known: ending foreign occupation; promoting social justice, democracy and respect for human rights; improving living conditions; fighting inequality; developing a culture of peace; and strengthening the dialogue among religions and civilizations. A consensus definition of terrorism would of course help to strengthen the cohesion of our common front to fight the terrorist threat. In that connection, it should be pointed out that, regardless of what the Secretary-General may have said, the Panel has not proposed a definition of terrorism, to say nothing of having addressed questions pertaining to State terrorism and the distinction to be made between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples against foreign occupation. The Panel has merely proposed some elements for a definition. It seems to me that there would be less of a need for a definition of terrorism if we were, as I said just a few moments ago, to resolutely address the underlying causes of terrorism.

As to sanctions, we should have liked the Secretary-General to evince greater caution. Indeed, we believe that sanctions should be considered only as a last resort once all possible peaceful means of settling conflicts have been exhausted, and that their objectives must be clearly defined.

In the light of all this, we believe that this section of the Secretary-General's report has three principal shortcomings. First, it makes no reference to legal frameworks or principles governing sanctions, including the United Nations Charter; secondly, it fails to indicate a time frame; and thirdly, it does not mention the conditions that must be met for sanctions to be lifted. We believe that the call for the implementation of Article 50 of the Charter as a mechanism to assist third countries affected by sanctions regimes is justified and should be promoted.

As to the use of force, the Secretary-General clearly endorses the Panel's logic regarding the interpretation of Article 51 of the Charter on legitimate self-defence. We do not share that reasoning. We believe that the wording of Article 51 is restrictive and that the legitimate right of self-defence can therefore be invoked and applied only in the case of armed aggression. Indeed, doctrine and jurisprudence teach us that Article 51 in no way covers imminent attacks. It seems to us that we are moving away from the prohibition of the use of force and towards a situation in which it may be legitimized under certain conditions.

The principles avowed to authorize the use of force may seem highly tempting and perfectly reasonable, but we face a twofold difficulty in that respect. The first pertains to the body that would have to approve those principles. We do not believe that an organ that does not represent all Member States — the Security Council, in which I have the honour to serve — could play such a role. That would constitute normative and legislative action surpassing the strict framework of the maintenance of international peace and security. It would require the involvement of a larger body able to formulate a defined legal framework and enjoying broader support. The General Assembly, of course, is such an organ.

The second difficulty relates to the implementation of those principles. Who can guarantee that, in the face of any given situation, the permanent members of the Council will agree on all four criteria and not digress, as they did in the case of Iraq? In other words, the adoption of those principles might not solve anything, because political assessments of situations by each of the permanent members could even lead to an impasse, such as that which arose in 2003.

With respect to the section of the report entitled "Freedom to live in dignity", we would express our doubts concerning the role that the High Commissioner for Human Rights could play in the Security Council in terms of the feasibility of the proposal to create a democracy fund, although the concept might be seductive; concerning the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, because they have yet to be subject to intergovernmental negotiations; and above all concerning the "responsibility to protect", which is extremely difficult to distinguish from the idea of humanitarian intervention which the countries of the South formally rejected in 1999.

In that regard, I would point out that there is no legal basis in the Charter or in international law for a right or duty to intervene. It would be overly hasty to define the "responsibility to protect" as a new norm prescribing an international collective obligation. We feel that the issue merits in-depth consideration in order to define its political and legal implications with regard to the principles of non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty of States. Moreover, it is legitimate to question whether the "responsibility to protect" would apply to all States of the world, or only to the smallest and weakest among them.

As regards institutional reforms, efforts have been made to pay greater attention to General Assembly reform, which we welcome. We feel, however, that the improvements proposed are inadequate, all the more so as the Secretary-General has, unfortunately, fallen into the same trap as the Panel by proposing that issues falling within the General Assembly's competency — disarmament, in particular, and such legal aspects as the use of force — be entrusted to the Security Council, which would immediately exacerbate the severe imbalance that already exists between those two bodies.

Similarly, we welcome and are gratified by the proposed measures to improve the functioning of the Economic and Social Council. However, we believe that bolder reform is required to make the Economic and Social Council a principal organ independent of the General Assembly and not subsidiary to it, as it is today under Charter, which requires it to report to the Assembly. Such reform would enable the Economic and Social Council to play a greater role, enjoy enhanced authority and work better.

We are also pleased that the Secretary-General has taken into consideration certain concerns of a number of delegations regarding the place of the proposed peacebuilding commission within the Organization. The proposal to create such a body is excellent, but many unclear aspects of it have yet to be clarified. We were surprised that, while the Panel proposed the creation of a universal human rights commission, the Secretary-General opted for a much smaller human rights council without explaining why. Granted, the Panel's proposal had met with resistance and questions — in particular on the risks of overlap with the work of the Third Committee — but the non-aligned countries were willing to work with it. The creation of such a restricted council will probably elicit many questions, first, as to why the Secretary-General changed his mind, and secondly, as to the size, composition and role of that body and its relation to the Third Committee.

The only information offered in the report in that regard is that the members of the human rights council would be elected by a two-thirds majority of members of the General Assembly and not by the Economic and Social Council. That raises new problems, because we feel that removing the council from the Economic and Social Council's purview would further complicate matters. It would further weaken the Council at the very time when we are claiming to strengthen it. It would also and above all undermine the fundamental principle of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. The Secretary-General's project, it seems, would be of benefit only to civil and political rights.

Finally, one important issue warrants consideration: How can we in practice identify the countries that are complying with the high standards of respect for human rights?

I will conclude by discussing Security Council reform. I recall that Algeria has defended model B, which we believe to be the most democratic option and would best ensure equitable rotation within the Council. On 7 March, the African Union adopted a common position on the expansion of the Security Council, to which Algeria is committed. That position reflects a return to the Harare Declaration, with one important specification: States representing Africa would be appointed by the African Union, which would apply its own criteria in so doing. The African position must be taken fully into account in all plans to reform the Security Council. We also believe that everything must be done to ensure that the project is adopted by consensus.

Our Organization, weakened and ill, does not need to be further undermined. It cannot afford to be divided on such a crucial issue. We believe that the suggestion to resort, if necessary, to a vote on that issue before the September summit is neither wise nor well considered. It could, by giving rise to precipitous action, prove highly risky for the entire reform process and for the very future of the Organization.

That being the case, it is now up to Member States, under your enlightened guidance, Mr. President, to reform and shape the Organization so that it will survive us all. My delegation will do its utmost to ensure that this reform succeeds and that the Organization gets back on its feet and meets the aspirations of the billions of people who expect us to face the challenges that confront us — challenges that we will be able to meet only together and in solidarity.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to express our appreciation for your constructive and transparent approach in steering the consultations on the preparatory process for the upcoming high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, including the consultations on the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005). I would also like to express Egypt's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in drafting that report, which can be described as bold, frank and clear. Allow me here to express our sincere condolences to the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See on the sad death of Pope John Paul II and to the Permanent Mission of the Principality of Monaco on the passing of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States.

Before commenting on the substance of the report, I wish to express our views on some procedural elements that are of special importance and that form an integral part of our joint effort to reach an agreement on a draft outcome document to be presented to our leaders for adoption in September 2005. Those elements are as follows.

First, negotiations on the outcome document should not be based on one particular source, but rather should take into account a number of references, including the report of the Secretary-General and the comments and observations made by Member States and by regional and political groups. During the course of the negotiations, such comments and observations should be translated into specific decisions and recommendations. In that context, we welcomed the assurances provided by the Deputy Secretary-General that the Secretary-General's reference to a "package" means that we should reach a number of balanced recommendations, and not that we should accept or reject the recommendations in the report as an integrated package.

Secondly, it is essential to ensure that the final outcome of this negotiation process will strike a practical balance between development and security needs. We might all agree in principle on that approach, but it is of great importance that each of us guarantee the full implementation of the agreed outcome and that the outcome will enable us to attain both our development and our security goals within a short and specific time frame. There is simply no longer any room for the rosy promises that for years made us both happy and miserable.

Thirdly, it is essential that our efforts focus on negotiating an agreed document that reflects the intergovernmental nature of the process. In those negotiations, each country should have the opportunity to contribute to the outcome and to participate in formulating it. I should like to emphasize that the confidence placed in the President of the General Assembly and in his facilitators entails the heavy responsibility of reflecting the various views and ideas expressed during the process and of avoiding the presentation of proposals and ideas that do not serve the purpose of reaching universal agreement.

Fourthly, we must collectively recognize that addressing the causes of the frustration and despair felt by many peoples as a result of our failure to resolve their political and economic problems is key to achieving international peace and security. Therefore, the outcome document of the upcoming summit should devote a chapter to practical recommendations aimed at addressing such sentiments with a view to finding lasting solutions to the hardships that produce them. Such recommendations should be aimed at strengthening the principles of equality, democracy and justice and putting an end to double standards and to economic and political favouritism.

Fifthly, our success in further deepening the principles of democracy and respect for human rights at the national level will depend to a great extent on our ability to promote and respect those principles in our conduct of international relations. It is essential that we respect the sanctity of the international legal and moral principles upon which the United Nations was established. Those principles are — and will always remain — the realistic and important foundation of a more secure and more stable world.

Sixthly, our endeavour to establish an effective collective security system and to achieve integrated development in all its political, economic and social aspects should not distract us from pursuing an honest and sincere dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures; nor should it lead us to neglect the essential diversity and the multifaceted nature of our societies. Indeed, such diversity is the key to a successful dialogue aimed at achieving global security and stability without prejudice to any culture or religion.

I now turn to the development aspects in the report of the Secretary-General. I welcome the fact that the report acknowledged the symbiotic relationship between development and security. I wish to emphasize that the departure point for any international collective development effort is the sincere and effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and of the outcomes of the major related United Nations summits and conferences within the agreed time frames. We should be able to meet the main challenges to development, including foreign occupation, armed and civil conflict and many other challenges. To that end, we should focus on formulating practical and implementable proposals in the areas of market access, debt relief and development, including the establishment of effective mechanisms to facilitate the integration of developing countries into the international trading system and the World Trade Organization, which will promote social and economic development.

In that context, I wish to stress that development efforts in Africa deserve special attention from the international community. In that regard, we emphasize the content of the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States and reaffirm the critical importance of lending full and unrestricted support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Through NEPAD, the African countries have taken huge and unprecedented steps forward in the areas of good governance, democracy and human rights. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen and expand the partnership between the international community and African countries within the framework of NEPAD and on the basis of African ownership of that initiative and the priorities we on the continent have set for ourselves with a view to achieving Africa's development goals.

Our effort to revitalize the collective security system enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations will require that all Member States participate in adopting a new vision to that end and in beginning the process. Even more important is our commitment to implement that vision in the multilateral context, which will require a comprehensive and non-selective approach in addressing all threats and challenges facing the international community. In that respect, it is essential to identify a clear approach to addressing the diverse ways in which threats are perceived.

The international community will be able to reach such an agreement only if we can mutually and sincerely acknowledge the significance and the sensitive nature of certain threats and if we refrain from attempting to impose unbalanced security agendas characterized by the application of different standards to similar, if not identical, situations. The notion of security — on which we are seeking to reach an agreement — should be universal, notwithstanding the diversity of visions, and of cultural and religious backgrounds.

Further to the views expressed by the Egyptian delegation during discussions on the report of the High-level Panel and on the Sachs report, I would like to comment on the new elements and proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/59/2005.

First, we must be extremely cautious about any attempt to confer legality on the concept of the preventive or pre-emptive use of force and to reinterpret the concept of self-defence to be applicable in the absence of an attack. Such an attempt could shake the legal and moral foundation of the Charter; it threatens to legitimize unilateral action and could provide additional leverage for the few States that are more powerful, that are capable of collecting better information and that possess larger military arsenals than the vast majority of States that do not enjoy such advantages — especially given the Security Council's failure to take appropriate or timely action as a result of the lack of unanimity among the five permanent members or the use of the veto by one permanent member.

Secondly, as the Secretary-General correctly stated, when addressing the problem of international terrorism we must focus on the protection of civilians. However, such protection must be geographically comprehensive and must adhere to unified criteria, beginning with the protection of peoples under occupation from State terrorism exercised by the occupying Power and from the repressive measures that such a Power undertakes, in addition to ensuring the exercise by peoples under occupation of their inalienable rights, in particular their right to independence, sovereignty and equality. That is the only way to address the feelings of frustration and despair that lead to the exercise of legitimate resistance through the use of force, which some wrongly seek to label as terrorism.

In that context, the key is not to ignore State terrorism or to agree on a definition of terrorism, but to try to achieve, through the General Assembly, a binding convention ensuring mutual and parallel international obligations that reinforce our ability to combat terrorism and violence through the settlement of international problems. The adoption of such a convention, which the Secretary-General has also proposed, would be consistent with the call repeatedly made by President Mubarak since 1986 — a time when terrorism was not yet recognized as a global phenomenon — to embark on a negotiation process for the drafting of such an instrument.

Thirdly, we support the approach taken by the Secretary-General with a view to achieving a balance with regard to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Such a balance, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction, should be based on a clearer recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all States. Just as the Secretary-General appealed to Member States to accede to the various conventions on weapons of mass destruction, we, in turn, call on all Member States to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to overcome pending issues with regard to the Treaty. Indeed the de facto status of some States is prejudicial to the principles on the basis of which we agreed to an indefinite extension of the Treaty. We should insist on the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference, with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament within a framework that ensures a much-needed balance between nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Fourthly, respect for human rights and the spread of democracy and good governance cannot be imposed on States. They can be achieved only by increasing the conviction on the part of nations of the importance of democracy to human development, bearing in mind the social, cultural and ethnic conditions and specificities of each State.

I would like to emphasize that our individual countries have made substantial progress in these fields. However, the theory of the "responsibility to protect", advocated in the report, could become a threat to the principle of the national sovereignty of States and could usher in a new era of intervention in the internal affairs of countries, particularly given that the legal underpinnings of the theory remain unclear and that it relies on an increasing division of responsibilities among the State, the international community and the Security Council. The concept has no legal or practical basis within the international community.

In this context, the proposal to establish a Human Rights Council appears to be an attempt to create a new principal organ additional to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In our view, the proposed new council would undermine the responsibilities assigned to the Commission on Human Rights and the Third Committee and would alter the intergovernmental nature of the international human rights review process, particularly as the mandate of the proposed council and its relation to other relevant bodies remain unclear.

Fifthly, we stress that any institutional reform must ensure that a delicate balance is maintained among the functions and mandates of the various organs of the United Nations. It should essentially aim at revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with the objective of enabling both organs to effectively carry out their mandates without necessarily burdening the Security Council with additional responsibilities. It should also promote the role of the International Court of Justice in upholding international law.

In that context, the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission would be valid only if the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council were able to carry out their respective mandates during both the preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding phases, while the responsibility of peacemaking remained with the Security Council.

In this context, we believe that the reform and expansion of the Security Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent membership is inevitable for ensuring the transparency and credibility of the Council on the one hand, and equitable representation for the developing countries and for all cultures and civilizations on the other. I must stress that Africa was at the forefront in calling for no less than two permanent seats, with all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the current permanent members of the Council. I would also like to highlight the African consensus that institutionally opposes the right of veto, but that at the same time insists on the extension of that right to new permanent members. The philosophy behind that position is the belief that a permanent member without the right of veto is, in fact, just a non-permanent member that enjoys a longer tenure. Thus, given the enormous responsibilities that new permanent members of the Council would have, they should be elected in a manner that reflects the strongest possible support from the international community — by a majority that would confirm confidence in their ability to undertake effectively their membership responsibilities, in particular with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Those are some examples of fundamental issues to be considered in the course of the review of the Secretary-General's report. In our view, they cover a small part of the comprehensive report, which is to be discussed in further detail during our deliberations on the various clusters.

I assure you, Mr. President, of the full support of the delegation of Egypt as you carry out your mission, whose goals we share, with a view to achieving a satisfactory outcome.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing, on behalf of Colombia, our great sadness at the passing of the holy father, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the spiritual guide of our country.

We would also like to offer our heartfelt condolences to the people of Monaco on the passing of Prince Rainier III, and to express our feelings of solidarity with his children and grandchildren at this difficult time.

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized these meetings, which provide us with us an opportunity to express our views on the Secretary-General's report (A/59/2005), for which we are grateful. We believe that that document merits careful study and that some of the recommendations it contains could be taken up during the intergovernmental negotiations on United Nations reform.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Andean Community; by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My country believes that consensus must be central to the reform processes, with all its diverse elements. If Member States decide to redirect the mandates of the Organization, that decision must be taken by consensus if multilateralism is to be strengthened.

We must begin this debate in a broad and frank manner, ensuring that all ideas, all points of view and all opinions are shared and expressed. The richness of our differences has been a source of strength for the Organization over the years. Now is not the time to stop this fruitful exchange of diversity and opinions. We are different; we are unequal; we live with those differences. The important thing is that we respect differences and be tolerant. We must not have a situation in which some dominate while others eke out a precarious existence. We must live together, with our differences, in order to create a better world for all.

In this debate, which is just beginning, let us emphasize the need for respect and transparency, so that substantive issues may be dealt with openly. Such issues are the reform of the Security Council, the strengthening of structures to promote social and economic development and human rights, as well as to combat terrorism, the global illicit drug problem and transnational organized crime. Other problems, such as the use of force and the question of responsibility to protect, or humanitarian intervention, need further and careful analysis.

The world of today may be different from that of 60 years ago, but great similarities still abound. Inequality among States is a constant, and the Organization still needs to commit itself to the genuine social and economic development of peoples. If there is a reform that is worth pursuing, it is one that involves a shift in focus and a commitment to cooperation for development, along with the promotion of sovereign equality. The Secretary-General's proposals do not give priority to these aspects; rather, he proposes the creation of hierarchical councils with an exclusive membership and reduces development to a culture of assistance.

The problems we face in 2005 are the same as those that existed in 1945. In the area of development, differences between North and South continue to exist. In the area of security, conflicts persist among and within States. Globalization has not benefited everyone equally. There are barriers to trade, despite the progress thus far achieved. Poverty persists, and disarmament remains the ideal of the few. The multilateralism of 60 years ago is as valid as ever, as it is a natural arena for relations among States.

Throughout the years, the United Nations has welcomed new ideas and new concepts. Regardless of whose ideas they are, and regardless of the level of support initially accorded them, such ideas can be incorporated as long as a legitimate and equitable legal framework exists — one that is negotiated and accepted by all Member States. It is not appropriate to leave room for interpretations that could be used in an arbitrary way and that could foster greater inequality and polarization within the Organization. All such concepts, whatever they might be, should have a legitimate framework in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, which remains as valid today as it was 60 years ago.

The United Nations, as a forum for achieving a global consensus, has had success in the General Assembly — the only organ with universal membership. That consensus has led to the ratification of important international treaties in the areas of human rights, the environment, disarmament, terrorism, organized crime and illicit drugs, among others. We must not forget that achieving such a consensus is possible and that it is strengthened through cooperation, which must be the fundamental motivation underlying the relationships that are promoted and that develop in the Organization. That is why we believe that the General Assembly, as the most representative organ within the United Nations, must promote debate, embrace controversy and seek consensus while allowing everyone to participate equally.

We regret the fact that development is being given progressively less space within the United Nations. We debate development issues in the Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council, but we do not have the capacity to implement decisions or to provide solutions. In terms of development, the United Nations is limiting itself to rhetoric. Assistance-related approaches and emergency solutions have been its responses to the need for progress and development of the majority of United Nations Members. We believe that true political will is required to eradicate poverty. Each State and the international community must work to meet the basic needs of the peoples of the world, and particularly those of the developing world.

We believe that the Economic and Social Council must be more than just a forum for cooperation for development; it must become a high-level forum on development, so that its work can encompass all of the dimensions of sustainable development and the means and mechanisms aimed at achieving such development for all nations. To that end, it is important to tackle, in a coherent manner, issues such as the eradication of poverty, the asymmetrical economic order, trade distortions, the exclusionary international financial system, and the growing scientific and technological gap, among others.

None of the recommendations dealing with the issue of human rights treats the question in depth or tackles the real problem. The problem is politicization, a lack of objectivity and selectivity in dealing with human rights in the world. This kind of focus has weakened the development of cooperation mechanisms, which can be very effective and advance the promotion and realization of human rights the world over. If we were to consider any of the recommendations mentioned in the report, we would favour that of a universal council and of a report on the human rights situation in all countries.

Human rights relate first and foremost to the right to life, to liberty, to security and to the development of a person. Absent the right to life, there can be no other right. The commitment of the international community to fight terrorism must be unequivocal. We reaffirm that there is only one kind of terrorism; we cannot speak of first- or second-class terrorism, as their effects on societies are similar.

Lack of political will cannot serve as an excuse to delay an agreement regarding the definition of terrorism. A commitment on the part of States is required in order to create the proper legal framework that is necessary to enable us to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Similarly, by fighting transnational organized crime, which encompasses the global illicit drug problem, we are also attacking the sources of the financing of terrorism.

After eight years of work, the Secretary-General concludes, as he states in paragraph 191 of his report, that the United Nations requires en administrative transformation to "ensure more focused, orderly and accountable decision-making". This indicates clearly that the Organization requires a transformation of its management to make it more effective and efficient; more communicative and transparent vis-à-vis Member States; and more professional and ethical, with mechanisms at its disposal for administrative control and accountability that would breach the gaps that currently exist.

In order to achieve this, minimal institutional change is needed, as administrative issues do not require an in-depth reform of the United Nations. Before thinking about creating new divisions or departments, States must conduct en evaluation of the present status of the Secretariat and its needs. Corrective administrative measures should be implemented, and codes of conduct should be strictly applied in order to achieve excellence in terms of ethics and professionalism.

With regard to the reform of the Security Council, my Government wishes to reiterate Colombia's longstanding position. We are convinced that only a decision taken by consensus can prevent further divisions, which undoubtedly would weaken the United Nations and multilateralism. Consensus means strength and unity; it means committing ourselves to restoring the credibility and legitimacy of the principal organs of the United Nations. Consensus will ensure for the Organization at least another 60 years — not just another decade.

In terms of multilateralism, regional organizations with knowledge of specific situations can play a valuable role. In this regard, it is important that our universal Organization coordinate its efforts with theirs and cooperate with them when conditions are conducive to so doing and when there is a need to involve them. Regional organizations have a fundamental role to play in the economic, social, and, in particular, political areas, as their perception of realities is unique and valuable and is therefore key to forging lasting and sustainable solutions.

We believe that in this way multilateralism, both present and future, would be strengthened. What we want is multilateralism that respects the Charter of the United Nations and of the founding purposes and principles of the Organization. We believe in a multilateralism that gives priority to cooperation and that works in harmony with civil society, respecting differences in terms of responsibilities and of respective contributions to the multilateral system.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my Government's willingness to participate actively and constructively in this process — a process that we hope will be transparent, with ongoing open consultations with all Member States aimed at reaching consensus. We believe in the sovereign equality of States, and we believe that the Organization, and specifically this process, must work in a manner that ensures respect for this fundamental principle.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to express the sorrow of the Government of Morocco, headed by the King of Morocco, and the people of Morocco at the news of the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who honoured my country with a historic visit to Casablanca, during which he reached out to Muslims throughout the world. Moroccans will never forget him.

We have also just learned today of the death of Prince Rainier III of Monaco, who left an indelible mark on his country's history of recent decades and who had friendly relations with the King of Morocco, just as our two countries were joined in friendship.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for all your efforts to ensure that the United Nations can adapt to new times and the instability they bring. I assure you of my delegation's support in all your undertakings.

We would also like to convey our gratitude to the Secretary-General, who has presented us with a report (A/59/2005) that is based both on the various discussions that have taken place at the United Nations in recent years and on more recent exchanges of views with regard to the Sachs report and the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565). The Secretary-General's own vision enriched the report of the Panel and made it more ambitious, balanced and realistic.

The report presented to us by the Secretary-General certainly includes many elements that meet our expectations, although we believe that some aspects will have to be considered further and clarified. We hope that the contents of that document will make it possible, in the few months remaining before the summit in September, to generate the impetus necessary to achieve concrete results that enjoy everyone's support.

Five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, which reflected the mobilization of the entire international community to give new impetus to the United Nations in this time of globalization, the Secretary-General is once again rallying all of us — this time to drastically reform the universal Organization and strengthen it so that it can survive the disputes that almost tore it apart in recent years. Essentially, the main question asked of us by Mr. Kofi Annan is whether we can resolve those disputes and renew the solidarity pact drafted by our founders nearly 60 years ago.

There are numerous facets to that solidarity. The first is solidarity between rich and poor in fully implementing the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The second is solidarity in facing new threats —

individually or collectively — to the security of our peoples. That of course includes the threat of terrorism, but also that of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The third, although not the least, element of that solidarity is also the source of inspiration for the title of the report of the Secretary-General: the defence of freedom, human rights and democracy for everyone, everywhere. Each of those parts of course includes normative aspects, such as the commitments of the international community, as well as institutional aspects, such as structures to provide frameworks to ensure and monitor the implementation of the commitments undertaken.

Philosophically speaking, the Secretary-General reminds us that the report is part of a whole and that the various parts of that solidarity pact are interrelated, and must therefore be read and discussed in that spirit. In other words, there cannot be development without security and the guarantee of freedom and the rule of law — and vice versa. The Kingdom of Morocco is determined to work to ensure that we will be able to benefit as much as possible from the report, which is an excellent working tool. We therefore hope that, between now and 14 September, our heads of State or Government will be able to come up with comprehensive proposals ready for adoption that are aimed at preserving the United Nations as the unique centre where all the efforts of nations are harmonized towards the common goals set out in the Charter.

How can we act together with regard to each of those components of solidarity I have just mentioned? That is the main question. First of all, with regard to development, solidarity is clearly the responsibility of each country, which must mobilize and maximize its resources and distribute them equitably among its citizens. Rules of the game must be put in place to that end, and they must be followed in a transparent manner. That is the reason the Secretary-General has once again reiterated in his report something that has also been the theme of his term of office: the need to promote the rule of law. That means representative institutions and a set of rules in which the rights and obligations of all are spelled out and mainstreamed. Lastly, it means an independent and credible judiciary. The rule of law is the only way to inspire confidence among domestic and foreign investors and to guarantee sustainable development.

However, given the great disparities that exist among regions with regard to resources, technological advances and the accumulation of knowledge, solidarity must also be expressed beyond borders. The Secretary-General has set a timetable for goals pertaining to official development assistance (ODA). The target is to achieve a level of ODA of 0.7 per cent of gross national income by 2015, and 0.5 per cent by 2009. The Secretary-General has also asked us to place emphasis on the granting of ODA to least developed countries, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

In that respect, we welcome the promises made by many developed countries in the context of September's summit, including the United Kingdom, which will be presiding simultaneously over the European Union and the Group of Eight, for which we are convinced Luxembourg will have laid the groundwork. Moreover, we hope that the efforts of other countries, including France and Brazil, to find sources of lasting development financing will be successful.

In all such efforts, the Bretton Woods institutions, with the support of the United States — the supreme economic Power — must play a more dynamic role, together with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council. That organ must be reinvigorated. We believe that the Secretary-General's proposals on that issue are inadequate and that emphasis must be placed on the coordinating function of the Economic and Social Council to ensure better regulation of transnational economic activity for development. Of course, the Council has a role to play in facilitating the transition of countries emerging from conflict. It must play that role side by side with the peacebuilding commission proposed by the Secretary-General, which must not depend — at least, not exclusively — on the Security Council.

Finally, the rule of law within countries must be accompanied by enhanced rule of law at the international level, especially with respect to the rules governing international trade and investment, as well as the procedures governing the settlement of disputes. The fight against impunity through support for international penal tribunals and the International Criminal Court is also relevant in that respect. Finally, there is a need to facilitate the pacific settlement of disputes through the referral of cases, as necessary, to the International Court of Justice, which should be consulted more often by the United Nations when the Organization encounters legal difficulties.

As to security, discussions to date have been dominated by the issue of Security Council expansion. That is a shame, because, while expansion is important in order to enhance the representative nature of that organ, we must not neglect the need to improve its response functions in crises threatening international peace and security. Of course, every region of the world has its own specificities, which must be taken into account in the expansion of the Security Council and its relations with regional and subregional organizations.

I would recall here that the Charter institutionalizes a balance between the Security Council and the General Assembly that we must respect. The Council must address crises, threats, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, whereas the Assembly must be the framework for general debates and the adoption of general rules through declarations or conventions. In other words, the Council must deal with tensions, crises and the settlement of disputes, the continuation of which may threaten international peace and security, but it must leave to the General Assembly any issue that calls for discussion and legislation in the medium and long terms. The only way to revitalize the functions of the General Assembly is to reinstitute its prerogatives and to protect them.

Small procedural changes are, unfortunately, insufficient to revitalize the General Assembly. The Kingdom of Morocco profoundly believes that, if the members of this organ are to become more active, the Assembly must enjoy clearly defined and respected powers.

As regards norms pertaining to the use of force and collective security, we must adhere strictly to the Charter and to its interpretation by the International Court of Justice, the principal United Nations organ of justice.

Mr. Dauth (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Furthermore, the fight against terrorism must be the focus of all United Nations organs, given that organized transnational crime is multifaceted. In that respect, we welcome the consensus adoption of the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, which I have the honour to Chair. It is the most recent and thirteenth specialized convention, and as such I hope it will be seen as a lucky number, which it sometimes is. While the thirteenth convention on international terrorism has been drafted within the United Nations system, we lack a fourteenth, the most difficult of all — a comprehensive convention that will finally provide a definition of terrorism. Once the convention on nuclear terrorism has been adopted — hopefully, soon, under the presidency of Mr. Ping — we will have to strive to adopt the final convention, reflecting the international community's agreement on a definition of terrorism that will help us better to understand and to fight that scourge effectively.

The section of the report on freedoms and human rights is crucial, given the fact that the purpose of international law and institutions is to serve humankind and to protect its fundamental freedoms. Here again, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have pivotal roles to play in the promotion of major international conventions on the protection of human rights and in the follow-up to States' efforts to align their legislation and action with those conventions. The various expert committees created by major international human rights conventions play an essential role in monitoring their implementation and compliance on the ground. Of course, in that respect, we can never overemphasize the need to take into account the diversity of cultures and civilizations, as well as the varied pace and history of their social evolution.

Finally, the Secretary-General rightly criticizes the current functioning of the Commission on Human Rights. However, the proposal to replace it with a human rights council remains vague and unclear. The size, role and place of the council have yet to be specified. We are ready to participate in the discussion to strengthen an institution that would be entrusted with protecting and promoting human rights.

It can be seen that the Kingdom of Morocco is taking a constructive approach towards this stage of determining the future of the United Nations. We do not want to limit ourselves to criticism, as criticism can be easy. We are taking a constructive approach, and we want to see the process through.

In his report, Mr. Kofi Annan has outlined an ambitious work programme, which includes reforms to make the Secretariat's functioning more effective.

From now through summer, we must work methodically and effectively to separate the primary from the secondary issues and avoid becoming distracted by purely conceptual debates — that is what universities are for. The President's great natural authority will ensure our success. However, we must help him by demonstrating the necessary political will through July, as he has requested. The only way to do that is through a skilful combination of determination to succeed and flexibility in the process — with a hand extended so that we can all reach the goal together.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We associate ourselves with the expressions of grief at the sad passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who, in a memorable visit to Chile, brought us a message of peace and hope in difficult times. We also associate ourselves with the condolences expressed in connection with the sorrowful death of Prince Rainier of Monaco.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom". We consider it to be a useful point of departure, not the goal. Like all proposals, obviously, it can be improved upon. We believe that the report contains many positive elements and others that need to be further refined. But all of them should be taken up in a process of constructive dialogue.

We support a comprehensive reform of the United Nations that encompasses the entire system and adopts a realistic approach that reaffirms and modernizes the key principles and values enshrined in the Charter. We must urgently create a more effective institution, one in keeping with the challenges of today's world and including the reform of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It is not enough to submit a package of minor reforms or deal selectively with one aspect or another.

Undoubtedly, the process will not be easy, and it will require flexibility on the part of all delegations. Of course, in the end, no delegation will be 100 per cent satisfied on every point. We must understand that this is part of the negotiation process. Our challenge, then, is to approach the entirety of measures with pragmatism and a willingness to compromise.

We share the view of the Secretary-General that security, development and human rights are indivisible and mutually reinforcing concepts.

We attach central importance to development. Development cannot be delayed because of a limited concept of security. Indeed, without development, security can never truly be achieved. In that context, we welcome the proposals of the Secretary-General and his call for concrete action to achieve the goals and the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Accordingly, Chile was an early and enthusiastic participant in the Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative, which, among other things, envisages a series of innovative mechanisms for development financing in order to increase current levels of official development assistance in keeping with the terms of the Monterrey Consensus.

We consider pertinent the measures and time frames proposed in the report of the Secretary-General for the developed countries so that they can fulfil their commitment of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance by 2015. As well, we agree that developing countries must strive to achieve better governance and a more transparent and efficient management of their resources and must adopt a development strategy involving civil society and the private sector. We agree that the special needs of Africa deserve a tangible and sustained cooperation effort.

We also attach great importance to the early and successful conclusion of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization negotiations. That is the appropriate forum for the liberalization of trade and for agreement on a set of clear and stable rules, particularly with respect to anti-dumping measures and the regulation of agricultural and textile subsidies.

With regard to the fight against terrorism, we must make an effort to find common ground, including by agreeing on a definition of terrorism, as the Secretary-General has proposed. The adoption last week of the draft of an international convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism is proof that progress is possible. It demonstrates that it is possible to reach agreement on sensitive issues related to terrorism.

We believe that it is necessary to have more concrete institutional proposals on how, from a multilateral perspective, to tackle that and other threats more effectively through a unified approach avoiding duplication of efforts. In particular, my delegation believes that it is necessary to have in place an entity responsible for coordination among the various organizations and institutions that collaborate in the fight against terrorism in the United Nations system. We share the view that States should ratify and implement the conventions and protocols in force related to organized terrorism and should strengthen their national criminal justice systems.

We believe it is essential to take human rights and due process aspects into consideration in the fight against terrorism. Both dimensions must be approached in a balanced fashion so that they are addressed in a way that does not impair the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism. In that context, attention should be given to the Secretary-General's proposal to appoint a special rapporteur to report to the Commission on Human Rights on the compatibility of counter-terrorism measures with international human rights laws.

We support the proposal to establish a peacebuilding commission to help countries through the transition from armed conflict to the rebuilding of their national institutions, and to help them overcome the traumas that result from those conflicts. We believe that the mandate of the commission would be incomplete without a strong conflict-prevention component, including the capability of monitoring potential conflicts and their possible spread.

We agree with the report's assessment that a new security agreement is needed, and we believe that such an agreement can and should be reached within the current parameters of the Charter of the United Nations.

The report touches on some aspects of the use of force. We support the attempt to define a common criterion on the use of force without having to modify the Charter. That is why we support the proposal that a resolution be adopted setting out principles governing the use of force. We believe that that proposal would help to strengthen the rule of law at the international level, because it would lend greater legal predictability to the implementation of Chapter VII of the Charter.

We agree with the rejection of unilateral preventive action. The Security Council has sufficient authority under the Charter to act in a preventive manner. Naturally, we understand that preventive action does not necessarily imply the use of force. Article 41 of the Charter mentions a series of non-coercive measures that the Council may take, which could be sufficient to deal with threats to international peace and security.

We particularly welcome the fact that the report accords central importance to the rule of law in its various manifestations. We agree with the Secretary-General that the rule of law is strengthened by universal participation in multilateral agreements. In that connection, we also believe that the creation of a dedicated Rule of Law Assistance Unit within the Secretariat to assist national efforts is a positive recommendation that is similar to my delegation's earlier proposal to establish a Secretariat focal point to coordinate United Nations action in post-conflict situations in the areas of the rule of law and national reconciliation.

My delegation does not fear — and indeed looks forward with interest to — a constructive debate on the international collective "responsibility to protect" in situations of massive human rights violations or genocide if national authorities are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens. It is not a question of recognizing a right of humanitarian intervention or accepting pretexts for aggression, but rather of enunciating an international obligation to be exercised by the Security Council if States are unable to do so in extreme situations. In a collective security system faced with interconnected threats, is not genocide a threat to international peace and security? We must also ask ourselves: when tens of thousands of people begin to be massacred and the affected States are unable or unwilling to protect their populations, will we do nothing? Should the United Nations remain impassive? This is an important subject. We should always place more emphasis on the responsibility to prevent genocide or massive human rights abuses than on the "responsibility to protect".

With respect to mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights, we agree with the report's diagnosis regarding the Commission on Human Rights. That body has lost credibility. Unfortunately, as the report states, many States become members of the Commission either to attack other countries or to defend themselves against criticism. With regard to institutional alternatives, we are open to discussing various options for reform in that area. To echo the preceding speaker, the representative of Morocco, we have a constructive attitude.

We agree on the importance of democracy as a universal right. We welcome the Secretary-General's reference to the Community of Democracies — composed of some 140 Members of the Organization — which my country chairs. It is a body that is open to building bridges with the United Nations in promoting the democratic ideal. Likewise, we support the proposal to establish a Democracy Fund at the United Nations to provide assistance to countries that request it in order to establish or strengthen their democracies.

We urgently need to restore to the General Assembly its importance as the highest deliberative body of the United Nations. We must improve the Assembly's agenda and working methods. A major current challenge is to increase the interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council and between the Assembly and civil society. Moreover, there needs to be a better division of the work of the Organization whereby a reformed General Assembly takes up some matters currently handled by the Security Council. With respect to the Economic and Social Council, we consider the proposal to hold annual ministerial-level assessments and to transform the high-level sessions into a biennial high-level forum to be sound.

Reform must also extend to the Secretariat. There is a public perception that the United Nations has serious problems of management, administration and oversight in certain areas. Although the picture conveyed is often biased or may seem exaggerated, we cannot deny that problems exist and that reforms are urgently needed. Moreover, the Secretary-General must have greater authority and resources to implement the rationalization of the Secretariat.

We agree with the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The Security Council undoubtedly occupies a central place in this exercise of United Nations reform. My country has emphasized the need for a more representative, more legitimate and more effective Council. With regard to the Security Council's composition, Chile favours increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members. That would help to enhance the Council's effectiveness, transparency and legitimacy.

Chile has expressed — and now reaffirms — its support for a permanent seat for Brazil on a reformed Security Council. In that connection, we have also expressed our support for countries of other regions. Moreover, we support the idea of a greater presence for developing regions. In that regard, we must reiterate that, in the present report, the region called "Americas" — which transcends Latin America and the Caribbean — seems to be at a disadvantage compared with other regions. Indeed, in model A, the "Americas" region is allocated only one additional permanent seat, while other regions are allocated two new permanent seats.

Security Council reform must not only encompass an increase in the number of members, but also include the Council's procedures and working methods. In any case, we believe that if we take a decision on Council reform by September, we must clearly establish a membership review mechanism that would enable us to assess new members' contributions. A reasonable date for such a review would be 2015.

I wish to conclude by asking that we not lose sight of the fact that the ultimate beneficiaries of United Nations reform will not be Member States, but the average citizen. We must heed the people's perceptions and demands of the United Nations, with its achievements and its problems, so that we can do much better in satisfying the yearning for peace, development and security.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to join in the condolences expressed by other speakers to the delegations of the Holy See and of Monaco. I should also like to thank the President of the General Assembly and to congratulate him on the way in which he is guiding our discussions.

Switzerland commends the Secretary-General for his determination to reaffirm the role of the Organization and to equip it with more effective means and instruments to carry out its mission. The reform proposals presented on 21 March are ambitious, measured and realistic. I thank the Secretary-General for his wide-ranging vision of current challenges and take this opportunity to assure him of my country's full support.

The Secretary-General recommends that development, security and human rights be regarded as three fundamental and interdependent goals. Switzerland fully endorses that approach. Each of those goals is important in itself, but they are also interconnected and should be pursued in parallel. Switzerland particularly welcomes the importance afforded by the Secretary-General to respect for the rule of law and human rights, and his innovative proposal of establishing a human rights council.

The Secretary-General has stressed on several occasions that his proposals should not be regarded as an à-la-carte menu from which to pick and choose as one pleases. Switzerland supports that approach because it believes that substantial progress needs to be made simultaneously in the four main areas of reform.

As to the proposals under the heading "Freedom from want", measures are required not only in the economic, commercial and social areas, but also to ensure environmental viability, prevent natural disasters, fight epidemics, and respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

The international community must not agree on new development goals; it must implement those agreed upon at the Millennium Summit and the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development. In other words, we must honour our commitments. For industrialized countries, it is a matter of doing their share of the work as to the quality and volume of their public development assistance, the mobilization of additional financial resources, and the opening of their markets to developing countries. It is, however, just as crucial that developing countries formulate and implement strategies conducive to sustainable development, and that they mobilize local resources to the extent possible.

As regards the attribution of development assistance, we must note that recent increases in public development assistance have primarily served to consolidate the resources of international financial institutions and to create new global funds. It is also important to make sure that appropriate resources are made available to United Nations funds and programmes in order for them to assume their tasks and responsibilities.

The Secretary-General has proposed a great number of measures that we deem, on the whole, relevant, balanced and realistic. We must now examine them in detail and work together towards their implementation.

With respect to the proposals under the heading "Freedom from fear", Switzerland reaffirms its deeply held conviction that the provisions of the United Nations Charter governing the use of force do not require any adaptation or reinterpretation. The system of collective security established in the United Nations Charter is adequate and flexible enough to meet current threats and challenges. The Charter recognizes Member States' individual right of legitimate self-defence when victim of an armed attack. Apart from cases of legitimate self-defence, it is the task of the Security Council to decide, on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter, the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

The Secretary-General underlines the Security Council's right to resort to armed force if necessary, including for the purpose of prevention, notably in cases of genocide or other crimes against humanity. In that context, Switzerland has noted with interest the Secretary-General's proposal that the Security Council formulate criteria to specify the cases in which collective military intervention would be legitimate. We expect the Security Council to involve all United Nations Member States in the drafting of those criteria.

A particularly interesting proposal is that of establishing a peacebuilding commission that would bridge the gap in international action that often exists between the peacekeeping phase and the development cooperation phase. Switzerland advocates that the commission report both to the Economic and Social Council and to the Security Council. In our opinion, the Secretary-General's proposal, according to which that subordination should be sequential, does not sufficiently take into account the imperative of coordinated action by the two Councils in the area of peacebuilding, nor is it adapted to the multifaceted realities of countries in transition. The questions of subordination and the commission's mandate require further reflection and work.

My country also supports the new strategy against terrorism outlined by the Secretary-General. The possibility of access by non-State groups to weapons of mass destruction has singularly increased the risk of terrorism and compels us to consolidate our multilateral control systems for those weapons. Switzerland also believes that the fight against terrorism can achieve lasting success only if fundamental human rights are respected. In that context, we support the Secretary-General's proposal that the Commission on Human Rights appoint a special rapporteur to examine the conformity of anti-terrorism measures with international norms for the protection of human rights.

Respect for international law, the promotion of the rule of law and human rights, and the establishment of democratic structures are all important factors for peace and stability. Switzerland welcomes the importance that the Secretary-General attaches to them in his report and his willingness to make them one of his priorities for the rest of his mandate. We shall discuss our positions in further detail during the consultations specifically dedicated to that subject.

As to the institutional strengthening of the United Nations, as I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, we particularly welcome the Secretary-General's proposal of replacing the Commission on Human Rights with a human rights council that would hold several sessions throughout the year. Switzerland invites all United Nations Member States to give positive consideration to that idea and to discuss its modalities.

At the institutional level, Switzerland also supports the proposals aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We are equally favourable to the strengthening of the multilateral environmental protection framework. That could be achieved by developing a more integrated structure, bringing together the United Nations Environment Programme, the bodies created by treaties, and the specialized agencies.

Finally, Switzerland supports the Secretary-General's proposals to delete certain obsolete provisions from the United Nations Charter.

The Secretary-General's proposals launch a new stage in the reform process. I wish to welcome once more the Secretary-General's willingness to reform and call upon Member States to hold a constructive dialogue on the content of those proposals under the guidance of the President of the General Assembly, in whom we have full confidence.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): First of all, let me join previous speakers in expressing my deepest condolences for the great losses of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III. All my sympathy goes to the members of their missions here in New York.

The Government of San Marino cannot but agree with the Secretary-General when he states, in the introduction to his report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", that the time has come for action, that the time for words and debates is now past, and that we must now move on to deeds. For many years, we have been discussing how we can implement a policy of reform. Now, thanks to the report of the Secretary-General and other recently issued important documents, we know exactly what needs to be done. All that remains for us to do now is to focus our efforts on how it should be done.

San Marino also agrees that the approach taken should be comprehensive in order to ensure an effective response to all the closely interconnected threats facing us today. We must not give in to the temptation to establish priorities that might seem attractive at first but would ultimately prove to be uncertain. A peaceful world and the prosperity and well-being of the world's people can be achieved only through an integrated approach founded on three essential pillars: development, security and human rights. To attempt to decide which of those three pillars is more important than the others is useless and futile.

Although it is essential to ensure the implementation of a comprehensive programme of reforms, we cannot thereby sacrifice any of the principles that underlie international cooperation. The Republic of San Marino could not, therefore, accept the irreparable rift that a vote on the more important reforms, especially those involving a revision of the Charter, would cause within the international community. Those reforms, which would be opposed by a number of Member States, would be divisive and would threaten both the credibility of the Organization and the effectiveness of its actions. We therefore cannot agree with those States that want those reforms at any cost, and we oppose the Secretary-General's idea that the reform of the Security Council might eventually be adopted without consensus.

Another general comment that we feel we should make concerns the correlation between the recommendations contained in the report and their implementation by Member States. Although most of the recommendations are set out in clear and unequivocal terms, there is no mention of establishing a monitoring system that would at least inform States about the implementation of the programme of reforms. Such a mechanism would pressure Governments and encourage them to implement the recommendations adopted.

A first specific comment we would make regarding the report's recommendations concerns paragraph 6 (h) of its annex, in which the Secretary-General recommends that the Security Council adopt a resolution establishing the principles regulating the use of force by the Council itself. It is not clear to us what would be the purpose of this process, since, in our view, the Charter is fairly assiduous in defining the circumstances and limitations governing the use of force. Indeed, to the best of our knowledge, the Security Council has never been accused of having used excessive or unnecessary force but rather of not having used it when it was thought necessary. A regulation of this kind might further limit the use of force in situations where it is in fact necessary.

We agree that States must assume "responsibility to protect" as the basis for action in cases of humanitarian catastrophes, but always on the understanding that, while it is the responsibility of each State individually, the exercise of that responsibility is collective and remains within the purview of the Security Council. This is the result of recommendation in paragraph 7 (b) of the annex to the report, which coincides on this point with the recommendations of the High-level Panel.

With respect to the institutional reforms, we agree with the importance accorded by the Secretary-General to the revitalization of the General Assembly. Over recent years, certain reforms have been made in the Assembly's working methods, with the result that they have been improved. However, those measures have not been sufficient to re-establish the authority that the most representative and democratic body of the United Nations should have. A drastic reduction in the agenda, aimed at focusing the Assembly's attention on the major issues of the day, would be the first and most important step in the revitalization process.

The recommendation that the Economic and Social Council should convene to assess urgent matters seems to us sensible and useful. Like the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council should be able to provide an immediate response, within the scope of its competence, to sudden threats to development that require rapid cooperation.

The idea of creating a Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights should be examined in greater detail. We agree that the Commission has lost credibility as a result of internal politicization. But why would a Human Rights Council be less vulnerable than a commission to a process of politicization? Even if the Council were composed of fewer members who would be elected directly by the General Assembly rather than by the Economic and Social Council, this does not seem to us sufficient to resolve the problems of this body.

San Marino believes that the International Court of Justice has always been a critically important body, because the rule of law is the conditio sine qua non for democracy. San Marino is thus always ready to support proposals for strengthening the Court and its actions. In paragraph 7 (e) of the annex to his report, the Secretary-General mentions the possibility of strengthening the work of the Court, but he mentions no practical measures that might be adopted to that end. We would be particularly interested to know the Secretary-General's ideas in this regard.

These are our initial comments on the report. My delegation will certainly have further views during the thematic discussion to be held at a future date.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the President for the manner in which he has facilitated consultations on the report. The transparency of the programme of work will enable all interested delegations to participate in the discussion of all the points raised.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): First, I wish to express deepest sorrow on behalf of the people and Government of Brazil at the recent passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. I also take this opportunity to express our condolences at the demise of His Serene Highness, Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

I wish to associate our delegation with the statement by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and that of the Permanent Representative of Argentina, to be delivered on behalf of the Rio Group.

The plenary meeting today, under the guidance of the President, inaugurates a time for action and decision with regard to the future of the United Nations. The resolve to address threats and challenges facing the Organization and the international community will be put to test. I would like to commend the President and the facilitators for preparing for a debate that responds to the imperatives of urgency, a balance of priorities and broad consultation among Member States.

I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, as well as his staff, for the wide-ranging, exceptional document we begin considering today. Brazil shares the Secretary-General's view that larger freedom — freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity, for all peoples all around the globe — depends on our individual and collective capacity to advance the ideals of development, security and human rights in a concerted, forward-looking manner. As the Secretary-General underlines in paragraph 17 of his report, "Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed."

Brazil has consistently affirmed, throughout the years, the interdependence of these causes. As President Lula stressed last September in the Assembly's 3rd plenary meeting, peace will never rise from poverty and hunger. If peace is our goal, it is our task to build it. We must address the deep-rooted origins of violence with the same resolve employed against the agents of hatred.

In the coming weeks, according to the schedule we have adopted, the delegation of Brazil will be addressing in detail every aspect of the multifaceted reform we should no longer delay. At this stage, I will spell out our general views regarding many aspects contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

As the report points out, achieving the Millennium Development Goals is an urgent task. As we prepare for the September summit, we fully endorse the recommendations related to the enhancement of official development assistance (ODA), as well as those to debt alleviation and trade.

We acknowledge the reference made to the work undertaken by Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain in the identification of innovative sources of finance. We fully support the call for the launching of an international finance facility (IFF) to support an immediate "front-loading" of ODA. The IFF is one of the mechanisms identified by the technical group's first report issued in September 2004 and served as the basis for the discussions held at the world leaders meeting on "Action Against Hunger and Poverty".

Let me stress that the technical group is actively working with a view to refining its analyses as to other possible innovative sources of finance. We hope that, as a result of the work undertaken by the group, as well as in other forums, such as the World Bank/International Monetary Fund Development Committee and the G-8, useful ideas may be considered at the September summit.

The Secretary-General's report acknowledges the role being played by Brazil and other developing countries in the provision of cooperation. Brazil remains firmly committed to assisting other developing countries to the full extent of its capabilities. Yet, in order for South-South cooperation to be scaled up so as to have an impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at the global level, international financial resources will have to be mobilized.

Still, there is a need to deter environmental degradation and natural resource depletion. Brazil remains firmly committed to the successful implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. My delegation intends to continue to contribute to international efforts within that framework, taking into account the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

Changes in the governance mechanisms of the international financial system are long overdue. We need a more democratic, stable and purposive international financial environment to lead us to development. Developing countries must obtain greater participation in the decision-making process of the international financial institutions.

The Doha round must be completed no later than 2006 and in a manner that fulfils its development focus. From our standpoint, that can be achieved only by substantially reducing trade barriers, enhancing market access and eliminating all forms of trade distortion, especially subsidies to production and export.

Technological research and development are key to achieving long-term sustained growth and changing living conditions in the developing world. Official development assistance is of crucial importance for building technological capacity, especially in least developed countries. South-South cooperation can also play an important role in disseminating knowledge and innovation that can be directly applied to fundamental development problems and constraints. In addition to that, the United Nations must implement specific policies that facilitate access to technology, technological development and technology transfer at the international level.

Debt reduction and debt sustainability are other key elements for a successful global development strategy. In the case of heavily indebted poor countries, Brazil concurs on the need for exclusively grant-based financing and 100 per cent debt cancellation. Careful attention should be paid to middle-income countries — countries that suffer a severe debt burden, sometimes leading to serious financial crises. That is the case of a number of countries in Latin America, including Brazil. Our countries have undertaken major institutional and legal reforms and are committed to sound financial and macroeconomic policies. The international financial community is called upon to support such efforts by providing comprehensive debt relief that would allow us better conditions in which to pursue the Millennium Development Goals.

In the human rights field, we believe that there is space for improvement. Brazil has argued in favour of the elaboration of an annual global report on human rights, which would build on objective information gathered by human rights mechanisms and special procedures. Our aim should be to reduce the politicization for which the United Nations treatment of human rights, both in the Commission on Human Rights and in the General Assembly, is known. The strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights could better capacitate it for the elaboration of such a report.

Human rights are a central matter in the process of reform. Careful consideration should be given to proposals, such as the creation of a human rights council, that could confer on the promotion and protection of human rights a priority compatible with present-day needs.

On humanitarian assistance, we welcome the specific references to funding and access, which may shed light on how to overcome some of the obstacles we now face, and to the need for more reliable and predictable resources to provide assistance to people affected by complex emergencies or natural disasters. A global sum for humanitarian assistance should be raised on the basis of existing needs and allocated in a non-discriminatory, balanced and proportionate manner. On access, States have the primary responsibility to deliver assistance to their population. If they are unable to do so, however, they must ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to those in need.

Threats to peace and security include not only international war and conflict, but also civil violence, organized crime, terrorism, poverty and deadly infectious diseases. That new concept of collective security can help to provide the tools needed to meet the most compelling contemporary threats to the international community.

The United Nations must be more effective in preventing conflict and reducing the risk and prevalence of war by addressing their root causes. Prevention must be central in our efforts and would necessarily include combating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The proposed establishment of a peacebuilding commission is a concrete expression of such a vision. Brazil has long affirmed the need for due consideration to be paid to transitional processes, from post-conflict to sustainable peace. We view positively the functions foreseen by the Secretary-General for such a commission, as set out in paragraph 115 of his report. We believe that the Commission, in order to bring together the objectives of peace, security and development, should answer to both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in a sequential manner, depending on the phase of the conflict considered.

The same preventive reasoning should also apply to one of the most pressing issues of our times: terrorism. Given the urgency and high visibility of that issue, the General Assembly, which recently concluded the draft convention on nuclear terrorism, should redouble its efforts to adopt a comprehensive international instrument to combat terrorism.

The threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons — a problem that seems carried over from another era — is today complemented by new ones: the proliferation of nuclear weapons in contravention of international law, and the risk of non-State actors, especially terrorists, having access to them.

Brazil is of the view that collective measures are needed to ban all weapons of mass destruction. We therefore attach equal importance to efforts aimed at disarmament and to those aimed at non-proliferation while preserving the legitimate right of States to the peaceful use of the technologies involved.

In that context, Brazil favours action on the basis of multilateral negotiations and agreements grounded in the established and universal treaty-making process, rather than simple recourse by the Security Council to improvisation and to coercive measures. The role of the Security Council should not be overemphasized in these matters.

We support the Secretary-General's proposals on restoring the balance among the principal organs of the United Nations. As far as reform of the Secretariat is concerned, we agree with the understanding that a capable and effective Secretariat is indispensable to the work of the United Nations. We also agree that the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat must be improved. We are therefore willing to review all mandates older than five years as well as the budget and human resource rules under which the United Nations operates.

The General Assembly's prestige as the Organization's chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ must be restored. We support bold measures by which the General Assembly would rationalize its work, speed up and focus its deliberative processes and strengthen the authority of its President. The Assembly must also concentrate on addressing the major contemporary political issues.

The Economic and Social Council too must be strengthened so that it can play a relevant role in policy coordination and implementation, and in the monitoring and follow-up of commitments in the economic and social fields, especially those to be agreed by next September. We fully agree that means for a high-level dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should be further explored.

As to the Security Council, discussions since the inauguration of the present session of the General Assembly have demonstrated that there is general agreement on the need and urgency of reforming that body in order to make it more legitimate, representative, democratic and transparent. No reform of the United Nations will be complete without reform of the Security Council. As the Secretary-General has stated in his report, a decision on that important issue should be taken before the summit in September 2005, and although it would be far preferable for Member States to take such a vital decision by consensus, "if they are unable to reach consensus this must not become an excuse for postponing action" (*A/59/2005, para. 170*).

During the present session, a very large majority of States have expressed their support for reform that contemplates the creation of new permanent and non-permanent seats in an expanded Security Council, in line with the description put forward in the High-Level Panel report as model A (see A/59/565, para. 252). As is widely known, Brazil favours an expansion based on model A. We believe that only an expansion in both membership categories will make the Council more representative of the present-day international community as a whole and hence more legitimate. Such reform should also encompass the Security Council's working methods and should be subject to review after a number of years.

Together with Germany, India and Japan, Brazil was encouraged by the interest and turnout at last week's informal outreach meeting with regard to the Security Council reform process. We look forward to further exchanges of views in that respect in the conviction that such efforts may help and complement the President's indispensable endeavours in guiding the membership to a decision.

There is no doubt that we live in a world that has been transformed from that of 1945. We must now also transform the universal institution created then. The United Nations is the common, universal framework in which development, security and human rights will best be realized in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me at the outset to convey our condolences to the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See on the passing away of Pope John Paul II, and to express our sympathy to the Principality of Monaco on the loss of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

We wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing these meetings to hear initial reactions to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report, which provides guidance on the many important issues that will be considered at the summit to review the Millennium Declaration and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is scheduled for September 2005.

At the same time, we wish to associate ourselves with the statements made by the delegation of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the delegation of Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

We come to this meeting strengthened by the collective and detailed decisions that the African Union has taken on many of the issues reflected in the Secretary-General's report. Those decisions are set out in the Ezulwini Consensus adopted at the meeting of the Executive Council of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7 and 8 March 2005.

Prior to the release of the Secretary-General's report, a delegation made up of the Foreign Minister of Ghana, the Foreign Minister of Nigeria and former President Konare of Mali, Chairman of the African Union Commission, came to New York to present the Secretary-General with a copy of the Ezulwini Consensus. The Ezulwini Consensus is comprehensive in its response, which makes our task easy in reiterating and recommitting ourselves to the position that Africa has already taken on the issues before us. However, for the purposes of this meeting, we would like to comment on some issues that are of special interest to my delegation.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General's report has recognized the importance of development as one of the pillars of a new collective security system. We concur with the report's statement that the world has the resources to reduce dramatically the divide that persists between the rich and the poor. In fact, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, in the Millennium Project report, showed that if donor countries would disburse the pledges already made at the major international conferences and summits of the past decade towards supporting development, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved.

The Secretary-General has also come out in support of the development agenda, for which we are highly appreciative. In the Millennium Declaration it is recognized that the international financial and trading institutions and systems are central in the creation of an environment that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty. Those international financial and trading institutions occupy an important place, as they provide resources for development and as they are also important actors in policy formulation. Together with the rest of the United Nations system, they will also need to provide assistance to developing countries that seek to elaborate the proposed MDG-based development strategies. We believe that those institutions should enhance their support for all efforts by developing countries aimed at achieving the MDGs.

As we seek to strengthen development cooperation, we also wish to emphasize the importance of the reform of those international financial and trading institutions with a view to ensuring transparency and to giving developing countries a bigger role in policy formulation and rule making.

A global breakthrough on international trade is important for the achievement of the MDGs, and this requires that progress be made in the Doha development round. Market access, particularly with respect to agriculture, would provide critical resources needed by developing countries to support development. Addressing supply-side constraints, including capacity-building, would also enable developing countries to earn improvement of their competitiveness and of their productive capacities.

As we have stated before, we would expect the Millennium review summit to focus on the special needs of Africa that were recognized in the Millennium Declaration. In the Millennium Declaration, the international community resolved to take special measures to address the challenges in Africa of poverty eradication and sustainable development, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced official development assistance and increased flows of foreign direct investment and transfers of technology.

In his report, the Secretary-General recognizes that sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the epicentre of the development crisis and that it is falling seriously short of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We wish to urge the international community to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which is the sustainable development framework for Africa and which has already been adopted by this body as the framework for the Organization's engagement with the continent. We wish also to highlight the importance of direct support for regional cooperation, in particular for regional infrastructure projects, as proposed by the Millennium Project.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's focus on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. In addressing those diseases the international community should support a comprehensive approach that also focuses on the development of the overall health infrastructures of developing countries. We are also pleased that the report has highlighted the importance of gender equality and access to sexual and reproductive health services as a critical component of women's empowerment.

We welcome the expanded proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of a peacebuilding commission and a peacebuilding support office to assist countries emerging from conflict. We believe that the new details on the peacebuilding commission contained in the Secretary-General's report will enrich further discussions with other delegations on the modalities for the establishment of that body. We appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General will provide even more details on the commission in the coming days. We have always believed that the peacebuilding commission has an important role to play in assisting countries emerging from conflict to develop a comprehensive and long-term approach to building conditions for peaceful existence.

We also support the Secretary-General's call for a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations.

In conclusion, we wish to recall that in the Ezulwini Consensus, the African Union highlighted the strengthening of the principal organs of the United Nations. Regarding the General Assembly, the African Union believes that it must be strengthened to play its proper role as the most representative and democratic body within the United Nations system. The intergovernmental nature of the General Assembly should be preserved to ensure that it remains essentially a forum of intergovernmental dialogue. The African Union further believes that there is a need to improve the balance of competencies and the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We believe that the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened so that it can fulfil its role as the central mechanism for the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and so that it can play a pivotal role in furthering the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

On the matter of the reform and enlargement of the Security Council, Africa has expressed its preference that it have not less than two permanent seats and five rotating non-permanent seats. The African Union has clearly stated that its seeks permanent seats that are truly permanent, that is, no different from the existing five permanent seats and enjoying the same prerogatives and privileges, including the right of veto. We are encouraged that the Secretary-General has implored Member States to take a decision on the important issue of reform of the Security Council before September. We in Africa are ready to engage with other delegations on this matter.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.87

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting

Thursday, 7 April 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping .... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 45 and 55 *(continued)*

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005)

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Mr. President, the Singapore delegation would like to thank you once again for leading this effort towards the 2005 summit, including organizing this series of meetings to discuss the report of the Secretary-General as a whole and then in clusters.

My delegation would like to congratulate Assistant Secretary-General Robert Orr and his team for their excellent work in putting together the important report before us. Theirs was a daunting task, because much had already been said in the two major reports that the membership of the United Nations had spent much time considering, namely, the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the Millennium Project report. It was daunting task also because after hearing the feedback from Member States on what they liked or did not like about the two earlier reports, their key challenge was to assemble a good package of recommendations that the Secretary-General could present to the General Assembly. In this regard, they have managed to prepare a fairly concise and readable report with about 60 recommendations in all, which is about half the total number from the two earlier reports. Now that they have done that, the ball is in our court.

The Singapore delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's refreshing approach in issuing his report as a call to the United Nations membership to realize what he called "larger freedoms" for all: freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom to live in dignity. To these we could perhaps add a fourth freedom for the United Nations: freedom from the inertia and narrow political interests that hold us back from really revitalizing and reforming the way we organize our work in this Organization.

My delegation hopes that we will all rise to this call to freedom, as the generation before us did when the United Nations decolonization process led the march to freedom of so many nations who became new States and are now represented among us here. The Trusteeship Council, which has been rendered redundant, stands today as a worthy testimonial of that major accomplishment.

In the interest of time and efficiency, the Singapore delegation will not repeat all that it had previously said — which remains valid — on crucial issues such as terrorism, the threats posed by the proliferation of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons, the use of force, the expansion and reform of the Security Council and the very significant

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and welcome idea of a Peacebuilding Commission. We will instead focus our preliminary views on some of the new elements in this report.

To begin with, it is worth noting that without peace, there can be no freedom. This was why the United Nations was created, to free or "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". While we have largely succeeded in reducing and phasing out inter-State conflicts, too many people today still know of and suffer from wars. Intra-State conflicts are a key reason for the lack of security, of investment and of development. A prolonged conflict situation creates poverty and want and uncertainty and fear, and it perpetuates a sense of helplessness and lack of dignity. We need to be more creative to break the vicious cycle of conflicts. My delegation strongly believes that there is scope for the Secretary-General to use his good offices to do more in the areas of mediation and conflict prevention. To that end, we should all agree to more resources being allocated in an institutionalized manner through assessed contributions.

In the context of freedom from want, Singapore appreciates the attention paid to Africa's special needs and, more generally, to the urgent need to dismantle barriers to market access and phase out trade-distorting domestic subsidies that hurt developing countries. We strongly support the recommendation that Member States provide duty- and quota-free market access for all exports from the least developed countries. We further agree that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States should be given the necessary support to enable them to break out of their poverty traps or to overcome the special problems that the Millennium Project report has identified, so as to achieve sustainable development. In that regard, I would like to echo what the Permanent Representative of Samoa said on the importance of the Mauritius Strategy as a comprehensive plan for small island developing States to meet their Millennium Development Goals.

In the context of freedom from fear, the "Five-D" approach the Secretary-General has outlined seems fairly comprehensive and wise: dissuading people from supporting terrorism, denying terrorists access to funds and materials, deterring States from sponsoring terrorism, developing State capacity to counter terrorism, and defending human rights. Singapore is encouraged that so soon after the release of the Secretary-General's report, the Ad Hoc Committee on an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism was able to conclude such a convention, after seven years of work.

In the context of freedom to live in dignity, Singapore fully subscribes to the importance of the rule of law as a necessary framework for an enabling environment in the new millennium in which we can work to advance human development. In the absence of the rule of law, the rule of man, mob rule or the law of the jungle will prevail. My delegation recalls the Secretary-General's landmark statement on the rule of law in the 3rd meeting of the fifty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly, in which he rightly pointed out that many of the problems that humankind continues to face today stem from the lack of the rule of law.

But laws and norms are also not static. They evolve over time. In a highly evolved global community, and especially in this new millennium, it is high time that massive killings and crimes against humanity become things of the past. Yet these things continue to happen, and they continue to be protected by the walls of an antiquated notion of absolute sovereignty. I am certain that none among us will speak for such crimes.

The issue then is what we, the members of the General Assembly, do about it. The reality is that we cannot simply wish such crimes away. My delegation sees this as a special challenge for Member States. We need to have frank, open-ended discussions to establish clear rules, underscored by clear and agreed criteria on how to prevent and deal with such crimes — criteria that would, at the same time, leave no room for abuse of any sort by anyone.

The Secretary-General also touched on democracy, asserting that the right of people to choose how they are ruled and who rules them must be the birthright of all. He also stated that its universal achievement must be a central objective of an Organization devoted to the cause of larger freedom. While Singapore is a democracy, and democracy is a fair and increasingly common means of achieving legitimate government, we believe that democracy should not be an end in itself. It is more important to have wise leadership and sound policies in place so as to ensure the delivery of results that meet people's aspirations.

Democracy provides for regular accountability by Governments to their peoples, favouring, but not necessarily guaranteeing, good governance. Good government requires good people at the helm who have leadership qualities and the best interests of the people at heart. The challenge for any country is to evolve a system that will continually inspire good and capable people to step up to the plate. Good leaders have the courage to stand up and do what is right — which often will not be what is expedient, especially in terms of posturing for the next election. Good leaders realize the importance of providing their people with a vision. They also believe in taking a long-term view by investing in their people and in infrastructure and by creating an enabling environment in which people can fulfil their potential and aspirations. Those are the necessary elements or ingredients for success in sustainable development that Professor Jeffrey Sachs and his team in the Millennium Project identified through their thorough work.

To guard against abuse and to prevent politicians and Governments from seeing their mandate as a short-term licence to do as they please, every State needs strong institutions for the rule of law with their own checks and balances. That is where the United Nations, as an Organization, can help, where such help is sought. By helping to build strong institutions and facilitating good governance, the United Nations can help advance the cause of larger freedom.

That leads me to my final point. The United Nations itself, as an institution, needs to be reformed and strengthened. We are encouraged to learn about the broad range of internal reform measures, some of which are long overdue — but better late than never — that the Secretary-General is planning to implement. One noble goal is to enhance the accountability of senior managers. In short, this is to practise what the Secretary-General has himself preached: to establish the rule of law in the Secretariat, with transparent rules and decision-making procedures. This should lead to a much better working environment for international civil servants by providing certainty as to their rights and responsibilities and eliminating any room for arbitrary decisions based on office politics or mob pressure. Regardless of rank, everyone should be held accountable for his or her own deeds or inactions. I would add that everyone should also be given his or her due credit, where credit is due. All of that will make for a more professional Secretariat.

In the cluster discussions, Singapore will provide further views, in particular on the revitalization of the General Assembly, the Secretariat and the proposed Human Rights Council.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to express its condolences to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

We would also like to express condolences to the delegation of Monaco on the passing of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

The Permanent Representative of Luxembourg has set out the position of the European Union. France fully shares and supports that position. I will therefore limit myself to making a few additional comments. First, however, I would like to refer to the responsibility that we believe we all share in the decisive period that has just begun.

We all understand the important issues that will be at stake during the September summit. These include, first, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and, in particular, the need for development efforts to be stepped up. Secondly, we must modernize the multilateral institutions. In this respect, we should ask ourselves what the cost of failure would be. We must have no illusions: let there be no mistake about the serious consequences of failure in September: the impetus to attain the Millennium Development Goals would be greatly weakened, and the credibility of our Organization would be damaged. Africa, whose special needs must be recognized during the summit, would also suffer as the result of such a failure.

We believe that the summit will be successful, because we believe that the conditions for its success are present. I would like to refer to two of those conditions. First, I believe that we have a good process that will lead to a successful outcome. Here, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, for the way in which you have been guiding our work. You have been able perfectly to combine the necessary openness and transparency with the authority that will enable us to make progress in a coherent manner. France fully supports the road map that you have drawn up for the next few months. Only in that way — under your direction and with the help of the facilitators — will we be able to reach the best possible results in September. It goes without saying that we fully place our trust in you.

The first condition, then, is a good process; that is now in place. The second condition for success is support for the proposals set out in the Secretary-General's report (A/59/2005), which we believe provide the best possible basis for the achievement of positive results. We could improve them, make them more specific or flesh them out. But we believe that they provide the foundation for our work.

I would like now to comment in further detail on the Secretary-General's proposals. First of all, the proposals are relevant, coherent and clear. They are relevant because the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change worked for a year on collective security. The Millennium Project brought together hundreds of development researchers. Above all, we discussed the issue at length in the Assembly under your guidance, Sir, at the beginning of the year.

The report of the Secretary-General has taken account of the contributions made by the Panel and the Millennium Project, as well as the contributions of delegations during the course of the many consultations that took place of the beginning of this year. The report of the Secretary-General has succeeded in focusing on the few questions that call for a decision of the part of heads of State or Government.

The Secretary-General's proposals are also balanced. Here again, our messages were properly understood. I am thinking, first, of development, which the report has now given its rightful pride of place while retaining the boldness of the Sachs report. Due account has now been taken of a number important issues that had been addressed inadequately by the two major outside reports, such as human rights, the environment, humanitarian action. The same is true for some of the key organs of the United Nations, specifically the Economic and Social Council. In our view, the report of the Secretary-General strikes a proper balance among all those equally legitimate concerns.

Let me briefly hail the clarity of the Secretary-General's proposals. Too often, we yield to the temptation to offer weak formulas that are never implemented. Thus, we welcome the Secretary-General's decision to propose specific measures that are both bold and feasible.

Of course, as I said a moment ago, we need further clarifications, modifications and additions. Some of the proposals themselves call for new developments, and France, along with the European Union, will offer suggestions in that regard. But again, during the discussions we must not lose sight of what is important.

I shall now address a few more specific matters in order to illustrate the general comments I have just made.

First, in our view, financing for development is a key element of overall balance. The commitments we make will determine in large part whether or not the Millennium Development Goals are attained. We must therefore make every effort to follow the course plotted by the Secretary-General. This includes the following elements: a specific timetable for increasing official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national income; a massive improvement in the quality of assistance; ensuring that debt is manageable; and providing the innovative resources that are indispensable for meeting the needs before us. On the latter element, France will work with others to clarify the Secretary-General's proposals, which we fully support. In addition to taking decisions of principle, we must plan a number of pilot projects, such as a tax on air travel to help fund the fight against AIDS.

My second example is the fight against terrorism, which demands unambiguous responses. We must identify terrorism and fight it together. The strategy outlined by the Secretary-General in his 10 March statement in Madrid offers the elements for joint action. We must be ready to adopt them. The adoption on 4 April of a draft convention against nuclear terrorism shows that this is possible. It shows that there is a determination to overcome our differences. We must continue pressing forward.

My third example is peacebuilding. Our discussions have shown clearly that we lack a forum to mobilize and coordinate action on the part of all relevant actors. In our view, the establishment of a peacebuilding commission is already among the expected outcomes of the summit. The mandate and functions proposed by the Secretary-General seem to us to be sound. They are in line with the general thrust of our early debates on this subject. We hope that we are nearing a solution on this matter.

Fourthly, the promotion of human dignity is a key purpose of the United Nations. In today's world, its importance is increasing. For our part, we believe in the "responsibility to protect". We believe in the rule of law. We believe in human rights. The Commission on Human Rights played a primary role in establishing the body of standards, policies and instruments that we formulated together over past decades. But we must recognize that it is now facing problems. To bolster the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations body responsible for human rights, France endorses the idea of enhancing its status, with a parallel strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Here again, to be sure, we must carefully consider the practical details. We must bear in mind that human rights are universal and that all States and civil society must therefore be engaged, in one way or the other, in United Nations debates on human rights. This is something on which special consideration should begin very soon, under your leadership, Mr. President.

Fifthly, the proposals related to the specialized agencies are of great importance. To an extent, they will determine the Organization's capacity to respond to the challenges of development, humanitarian action and the environment. It is increasingly obvious that, for some agencies, bold reform is required to ensure the coherence of their activities. The September summit will provide a unique opportunity to create momentum in that direction. Here, I am thinking in particular of the environment.

Let me end with a few words about the principal organs of the United Nations. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposals on the revitalization of the General Assembly and on the Economic and Social Council, and we are prepared to work on those proposals. We support their general thrust, although, of course, they require some clarification.

On the Security Council, the French position is well known; it has not changed.

As you have said, Mr. President, we are beginning the second phase of our work leading up to the summit. This will be a decisive phase, for which the Secretary-General, as requested, has provided the solid foundation we require to formulate the draft decisions that we will place before our heads of State or Government. Now, we must work actively for success.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to echo previous speakers' words of condolence on the passing of the head of the Catholic Church and of the head of the Government of Monaco.

The Russian delegation welcomes this discussion of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", which is taking place in a collective and transparent format — that is, in a General Assembly meeting.

The content of the report is consonant with Russia's fundamental position on the strengthening of the international system of collective security, with the United Nations and the Security Council as key players; on the enhancement of the structures of the world Organization; and on increasing the effectiveness of its work in all areas.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General's conclusions on the interconnectedness of the various actions that need to be taken to address the fundamental threats and challenges facing the world today. Indeed, the role of the United Nations in tackling these issues is pivotal.

However, the Organization must have the necessary resources at its disposal in order to be more effective and more efficient. That is the main goal of United Nations reform and should lead to a further rallying of the international community around the principles of multilateralism. That is why decisions on fundamental issues should be based on the broadest possible agreement among Member States and on the bedrock of international law — the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General rightly expressed the common understanding that socio-economic development is a priority, identifying key areas of work to implement the Millennium Development Goals. We agree with the rationale of the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, which served as a basis for the report. That rationale represents a recognition of the relevant commitments made in the area of development with respect to developed and developing countries, and this, in our opinion, is a constructive basis for decision-making at the September summit.

With respect to reform of the Economic and Social Council, we support the focus on more effective implementation of the decisions taken at global socio-economic conferences; the strengthening of the link between the normative and operational activities of the United Nations system; and the enhancement of the Council's capacity to address the socio-economic problems related to post-conflict peacebuilding and development. However, we are not convinced that there is a need for a major review of the Council's functioning. We believe that all of the reform initiatives proposed by the Secretary-General are fully attainable within the framework of the current format of the Council.

One of the most important elements of the "new consensus" referred to in the report should be agreement on the issue of the use of force. Russia believes that the Charter of the United Nations remains a reliable and solid legal basis for resolving problems related to the use of force and does not require revision or a new interpretation. We fully share the Secretary-General's recommendations on the adoption of a Security Council resolution that sets out principles on the use of force. The elaboration of such principles, however, must not compromise the Security Council's ability to take relevant decisions in specific situations.

The Secretary-General and the High-level Panel define the concept of "responsibility to protect" as an "emerging norm". Strictly speaking, the establishment of an international norm presupposes that there is wide support within the international community for such a norm. However, that is not the case here. Yet it is clear that massive human rights violations and genocide could be cause for intervention by the international community. Such action can be taken only when authorized by the Security Council, once the Council has qualified the relevant internal or regional crisis as a threat to international peace and security under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. In such cases, Security Council decisions must be based on reliable information. The positions of the relevant regional organizations should be taken account of, and the use of force must remain a last resort.

On the whole, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposed comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism, including countering its newest and most dangerous manifestations — first and foremost, the threat of terrorists' gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

We support the willingness of the Secretary-General and of the High-level Panel to contribute to the drafting of a universal definition of terrorism. However, the elements proposed for such a definition are more political than legal in character. It is important to avoid wording that could be interpreted as placing the criminal acts of terrorists on an equal footing with the anti-terrorist efforts of States.

We agree with the Secretary-General's call for the further universalization and fine-tuning of anti-terrorist conventions and mechanisms. An important step in this area was the adoption on 1 April of this year by the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism of the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which was initiated by Russia seven years ago. We hope that the text of that Convention will be adopted by the General Assembly in the near future.

As concerns the disarmament section of the report, I should like to point out the rightly emphasized need for further effective steps to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, including the counter-terrorist aspect of this problem. Worthy of consideration is the recommendation to adopt a Security Council resolution that would make it more difficult for terrorists to acquire or use man-portable air defence systems.

However, at this stage it would be premature to speak of pushing for the drafting of a legally binding international instrument on the marking, tracing and brokering of small arms and light weapons. There is no agreement yet on this issue, and the work of the expert groups is ongoing.

We share the view that the protection of human rights must be one of the components of the United Nations strategy to combat terrorism. We must also bear in mind the threat posed by terrorism to human rights at the national and international levels, as well as the problem of protecting victims of terrorism.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the work of the Commission on Human Rights is often hampered due to excessive politicization, confrontational attitudes and the use of double standards. Change is definitely overdue in that respect. But what changes are required? And how can the positive aspects of the work of the Commission on Human Rights be maintained? Clearly, we have to keep in mind the broad support that exists for the High-level Panel's idea of universal membership in the Commission.

We share the concern expressed about the failure to allocate sufficient resources to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially in the light of the proposals made to broaden its area of responsibility.

One of the key components of United Nations reform is reform of the Security Council to make that key organ in the security sphere more representative. Russia's position on specific aspects of the issue of Council expansion is well known; we have expressed it repeatedly, including during the discussion on the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565). We must continue our efforts to reach the broadest possible agreement on that issue in order to avoid a schism in the United Nations, which would have grave consequences for the world Organization.

With regard to amending the Charter of the United Nations, a cautious approach is required. We continue to believe that, at this stage, it would be premature to discuss deleting the articles concerning the Military Staff Committee.

We consider that the Secretary-General's recommendations will encourage joint efforts to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations, including through strengthened cooperation between the Organization and regional partners, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We support the idea of creating a peacebuilding commission to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of post-conflict assistance to countries emerging from crisis. The working methods for such a body must be carefully and thoroughly discussed.

In our view, the implementation of the proposed reforms should not increase the financial burden on Member States.

We reaffirm the General Assembly's decisive role in ensuring that the Organization's resources are used in the most efficient way, in deciding on the specific ways in which they will be used, and in appropriately monitoring the work of the Secretariat.

In general, the Secretary-General's proposals are a solid basis for a successful United Nations summit in September. The important problems mentioned in his report deserve to be considered carefully and thoroughly, without any artificial deadlines. With regard to some issues on which there is broad agreement or, better yet, consensus, decisions could be taken very soon, before the September summit. We agree with the Secretary-General that the summit should result in a number of far-reaching and courageous decisions. Russia will do its utmost to facilitate that.

Mr. Ilkin (Turkey): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his visionary, comprehensive and thought-provoking report (A/59/2005), which will be guiding us during the reform process. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your active personal involvement in the reform process and for your successful conduct of our meetings and consultations. Last but not least, my warmest thanks go to our facilitators, who are doing everything possible to ensure the successful conclusion of our endeavours to reform the United Nations.

While we fully align ourselves with the European Union statement, I would also like to emphasize some points of particular interest to Turkey.

We have come a long way since the 1990s in our efforts to reform the Organization. We recognize that the prospect of reform seems more within reach than ever before. All Member States should seize the opportunity to contribute to the reform process and should show maximum flexibility in order to achieve an outcome that is cohesive, lasting and in the interest of the Organization as a whole.

When we undertook to reform the Organization, we knew that there was a difficult and long road ahead. We should continue to strive to find the best solutions in each reform cluster, which will strengthen the credibility of the Organization and sustain it for a long time to come. As we do that, we should acknowledge that the framework and the substance of the reform package are both of the utmost importance. There is no way that we can rebuild the Organization in a selective manner, leaving some parts of the old structure intact. That is something we cannot afford to do.

It is clear that one of the main difficulties on the way to achieving reforms is the restructuring of the Security Council. It is only natural that we might have differences among ourselves, since every country has its own interests, requirements and expectations. All of these need to be reconciled. Although full consensus is very desirable, it seems that we may not be able to achieve it on this particular issue. Yet the United Nations Charter clearly defines what is required to amend it. What is important is that we find a common denominator among the overwhelming majority of Member countries.

As for the restructuring of the Security Council, the Secretary-General clearly underlined in his report that models A and B are not presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We will try to see to what extent we can produce a common denominator from those models — if need be, by introducing some new ideas. For example, is the number 24 for the total membership of a new Security Council an unrevisable figure? Why not 25 members, for example? Why is there a need to reorganize the existing regional areas and to reduce their number from five to four? Such a change would necessitate an entirely new format for the functioning of the various United Nations bodies. What is more, through the proposed merger, the Western European and Eastern European groups stand to lose a seat — something that potential non-permanent members from those two groups could not afford.

On the other hand, the review mechanism envisaged for the year 2020 does not seem realistic when we consider what we have been experiencing for the past 10 years. Thus, we should agree on a new structure for the Security Council that would not necessitate further change for the foreseeable future.

The Security Council and the General Assembly are two inseparable institutions. Clearly, the General Assembly also needs to be reformed, and one can see that there is a general understanding on what needs to be done. As we restructure the Security Council, we should ensure that we retain the delicate balance between the two organs. In other words, in real and practical terms, the role and the powers of the General Assembly should not be overshadowed.

As to the criteria to be taken into consideration in evaluating candidatures, those proposed in the reports are indeed objective. Yet we must admit that they are quite restrictive and exclusive. We should not deprive countries of non-permanent seats on the Security Council just because they are unable to fulfil all or some of the criteria. In principle, all countries should be represented at some time in all United Nations bodies, on a rotational basis, if necessary.

Moreover, the criteria related to participation in peacekeeping operations need to be reconsidered and more broadly interpreted. The contributions of Member States to the maintenance of international peace and security, as referred to in Article 23 of the Charter, cannot and should not be limited solely to their contributions to United Nations-led peacekeeping operations. In honouring that article, we must be inclusive. We need to take into account the contributions of Member States to peacekeeping operations mandated but not led by the United Nations. That is a realistic and feasible approach, as we are trying to promote cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. More and more, we are asking regional organizations to contribute to peacekeeping operations throughout the world. Yet we are still making a clear distinction between United Nations-led operations and operations conducted by regional organizations. If regional organizations are not encouraged to make contributions to United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations, then the United Nations will have to undertake such operations using its own assets. The question is, can the United Nations afford that?

Terrorism has undoubtedly become one of the most serious threats to the peace, security and welfare of the global community. As a country which has long suffered from this scourge, Turkey has been calling for increased international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. We welcome the suggestions put forth by the Secretary-General for preventing terrorism, as well as his comprehensive strategy to eradicate that universal threat. We strongly believe that the legal framework in this particular area can be strengthened only if all Member States become parties to the relevant United Nations conventions and protocols.

I would like to touch upon the High-level Panel's recommendations on sanctions. The recommendations address only one basic dimension of the issue, without referring to the needs and problems of third States in implementing sanctions. It is a fact that Article 50 of the Charter cannot be easily invoked. Turkey's experience in the aftermath of the Iraq-Kuwait conflict is a case in point. Therefore, we welcome the Secretary-General's clear reference to that shortcoming in his report.

The issue of the use of force is very much at the heart of United Nations reform. The common understanding that we are expected to reach on this issue will have a direct impact on the future role of our Organization in defending peace and security.

In order not to repeat what has already been said by a number of my colleagues, I would just like to reiterate that Turkey also fully shares the vision and strategy of the Secretary-General with respect to what he has so eloquently termed "freedom from want".

We concur with the Secretary-General's inclusive and comprehensive approach towards addressing the current problems of Africa. In the course of all of the deliberations and work in this Organization, therefore, we should always take the African dimension into account, with a view to extending vital coordinated support to help African countries. The Turkish Government declared 2005 the Year of Africa and looks forward to further developing close relations and cooperation with the countries of the continent.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General related to the Economic and Social Council are valid and appropriate. The Economic and Social Council definitely needs to be revitalized in the light of the immense changes that have taken place in the economic and social spheres over the past 60 years. A more focused Economic and Social Council should provide strategic guidance, promote coherence and coordination and evaluate performance without interfering in the work of other financial and trade organizations.

We must examine in depth the issue of the proposed human rights council. Since the idea is new, and since it would inevitably affect the functioning of human rights mechanisms in the United Nations as a whole, we need to further evaluate it and consult among ourselves.

As to the reorganization of the Secretariat, we are of the opinion that the most authoritative person to come up with new ideas and recommendations is the Secretary-General himself. We have full confidence in the wisdom and experience of the Secretary-General, and support his ideas and proposals related to the reorganization of the Secretariat.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Denmark would like to fully align itself with the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

Denmark welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). In our view, the recommendations set out by the Secretary-General form a good basis for devising a comprehensive United Nations response to the threats and challenges which are facing the world today in the fields of development, security, human rights, justice and the rule of law. We agree with the Secretary-General that the recommendations are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. They should be dealt with by Member States accordingly.

The report of the Secretary-General raises many important and complicated issues. I would like to single out three central challenges to which we attach primary importance. First of all, at the summit, heads of State or Government should agree on financing the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, with particular emphasis on Africa.

Secondly, the peacebuilding capacity of the United Nations should be strengthened through the establishment of a peacebuilding commission, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report. We look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's more detailed proposals on this crucial issue.

Thirdly, the United Nations must strengthen its fight against terrorism based on the recommendations and strategy of the Secretary-General. The United Nations must also strengthen its efforts in the fight against weapons of mass destruction.

Obviously, those three central issues cannot be seen in isolation. Heads of State or Government should take further steps to strengthen United Nations efforts in the fields of human rights and the rule of law. They should also agree on effective measures to deal with climate change and enhance environmental protection.

We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General, contained in the annex to the report, on access to reproductive health. At the summit, world leaders must reiterate the linkage between achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring reproductive rights and universal access to reproductive health, as well as the importance of an intensified fight against HIV/AIDS.

The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out the need for continued reform of the Secretariat and of intergovernmental bodies. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue the modernization of the Organization, which he has set in motion under his prerogative as chief administrative officer.

Denmark will engage actively in efforts to further develop the proposals of the Secretary-General regarding reform of the General Assembly, the Security

Council and the Economic and Social Council. We commend the Secretary-General for his proposal to establish a human rights council and look forward to seeing that recommendation further elaborated.

Heads of State or Government must take bold and ambitious decisions at the summit so as to ensure that the United Nations can better respond to the threats and challenges facing today's world. With his excellent report, the Secretary-General has now put the ball in the court of Member States. May I assure you, Mr. President, of the determination of this delegation to work actively with you, your facilitators and Member States in the continued preparatory process under your able leadership.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The fact that many of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005) consist of reaffirmations of previously accepted principles and commitments and of exhortations to accede to, ratify or fulfil previously existing treaties shows that there is nothing new to say, that the time has passed for declarations concerning reform of the system to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and deal with the threats of the world today and that what needs to be done now is carry out our promises.

The Government of Uruguay therefore agrees with the Secretary-General that the time has come for decisions, that we must face immediate threats with immediate action and that the meeting of world leaders in September on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations offers an excellent opportunity to reach agreement on the work programme for the twenty-first century.

However, we are not so certain that the decisions should be adopted as a package, as the Secretary-General proposes. We believe that we should act with prudence to ensure that, in pursuing the ambitious goal of reaching agreement on the whole package of measures, we do not end up delaying implementation. We must leave open the possibility of taking a progressive approach to reform and adopting decisions as agreement is reached.

Care must also be taken with how the measures are adopted. We do not believe that, if consensus is impossible, we should press forward and adopt measures that have only the partial support of States. At least the measures involving major reforms or amendments to the Charter must be adopted by consensus. The adoption of measures on such important questions without the international community's broad support would not strengthen our ability to resolve the great problems we have to face.

Uruguay agrees with most of the Secretary-General's recommendations, but we note that many of them, which consist of appeals to States to fulfil commitments they have made and obligations flowing from treaties and conventions, are reiterations of recommendations already made in other forums and instruments, such as, for example, the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565). Unfortunately, the Secretary-General does not propose any mechanism to assess the extent of States' compliance with those recommendations. He might have proposed, for example, the preparation of periodic reports on the ratification of the most important international instruments and the extent of their implementation.

Moreover, there are recommendations in the section entitled "Freedom from want" that seem too general and imprecise. I have the impression that many States, in particular developing countries, that are prepared to comply with some of the recommendations contained in paragraph 5 of the report's annex, would not know where to begin. It would have been very useful to have more concrete guidance in those cases.

The recommendations in the section entitled "Freedom from fear" include one that causes us serious doubts: the recommendation requesting the Security Council to adopt a resolution setting out the principles governing the use of force. It is understood that this is an attempt to regulate the use of force by the Security Council, not by States. My delegation can see no need to attempt such regulation, which would include unnecessary reaffirmations of existing principles and rules so fundamental that their reaffirmation would be redundant. According to the Secretary-General, such a resolution should also set out criteria to guide the Security Council in authorizing or resorting to the use of force. But it is obvious that the Security Council carries out its functions under Chapter VII using those criteria. Thus, their explicit formulation in a resolution is unnecessary. How can it be imagined that the Security Council would resort to the use of military force without taking into account the purpose for which it is used, the seriousness of the threat or the chances of success?

The regulation of the use of force by the Security Council seems not only unnecessary but dangerous because the creation of rules in addition to the provisions of the Charter, or rules interpreting these provisions, could end up working as a straitjacket that puts undue constraints on the Council's discretion to take action under Chapter VII of the Charter, leading to inaction.

At this moment, my delegation cannot adopt a final position on that matter. To do so, we need to undertake a more detailed analysis of the proposals, which include, among other issues, that of deciding which organ has the authority to adopt the proposed regulation.

The recommendation concerning the International Court of Justice is very ambiguous. First, we see no need for the international community to recognize the important role of what is nothing less than the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Secondly, one would need to know why the Secretary-General believes that the work of the Court needs to be strengthened and what ideas he has for achieving that objective. Is he thinking of a change in the Court's composition, a change in its procedures, or a change in its jurisdiction?

With respect to institutional reform, Uruguay reaffirms that priority should be given to the revitalization of the General Assembly. We also believe that a drastic reduction in its agenda and focusing it on the most important problems of the day are the most appropriate way to achieve that objective. All the other measures can improve the procedures and streamline the functioning of the Assembly, but they are not enough to ensure that the Assembly will regain its due authority as the most representative organ of the Organization.

With respect to the Security Council, we note that the Secretary-General refers to its reform as a means of ensuring greater representation of the international community in that organ. Thus, he recommends the adoption in September 2005 of a decision supporting one of the two models for reform proposed by the High-level Panel for Threats, Challenges and Change. However, we must recall that in reforming the Security Council, we are seeking to make it not only more representative but also more democratic and more effective. Consultations and negotiations have been taking place in recent years to achieve that threefold aim. The difficulties in reaching agreement are due precisely to the fact that some of the reform proposals for ensuring greater representativity actually create obstacles to achieving the other two objectives.

We find very sound the proposal that the Economic and Social Council should convene whenever there is a threat to development so that coordinated measures to respond to the situation can be adopted. That would permit the Council not only to react immediately but also to coordinate its work with that of the Security Council when the circumstances warrant it.

Finally, we agree that we should make significant institutional and functional changes to the Commission on Human Rights. However, we fail to see how a smaller human rights council elected by the General Assembly would be shielded from the risks of politicization and the ensuing loss of credibility.

I believe that before taking a decision on this matter, we should have more information on aspects of the proposal that are not clear. For example, we need clarification about the last sentence of paragraph 183 of the report, which, enigmatically in our opinion, says in the Spanish version that, "Las personas" elected to the human rights council should undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards. Perhaps the terminology used in the Spanish version is an error of translation. But, if that is not the case, perhaps the proposal is pointing to a way forward that could really correct the institutional weaknesses of the Commission on Human Rights.

In the debates planned for the coming days, my delegation intends to make additional comments.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Republic of Korea, to join other delegations in mourning the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco. I offer my heartfelt condolences to all who have been touched by the loss of those two remarkable persons.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his dedication in producing his report (A/59/2005). We believe that the report will lay the groundwork for a negotiated package of decisions to be taken by world leaders at the high-level plenary meeting in September. Now it is the duty of Member States to translate the report's recommendations into actions that will enable all people to live in larger freedom, leading towards peace, prosperity and progress.

The Secretary-General rightly emphasized the importance of consensus as the basis for decisions at the high-level plenary meeting. The objective of those decisions should be to make the General Assembly more flexible, effective and efficient in addressing the pressing needs of the global community. Accordingly, Member States should refrain from rushing into any decision that might divide them. Broad consensus is the only way to ensure the legitimacy and the full implementation of the decisions that will come out of our serious efforts this year.

We share the Secretary-General's view that for the first time ever the international community has the resources and the knowledge necessary to realize the goal of universal freedom from want. Hence, our debate on development issues should focus on how to faithfully carry out existing commitments based on shared responsibility and accountability, as agreed in Monterrey and Johannesburg.

As an emerging donor with unique development experience, the Republic of Korea has intensified its efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries. My Government is now working out a long-term plan to increase and improve official development assistance within our means.

The seven clusters of public investment and policies for national development proposed by the Secretary-General should be developed in a balanced way to reduce poverty effectively. Given that 70 per cent of people in extreme poverty live in rural areas, renewed focus should be placed on rural and agricultural development.

Successful completion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations, combined with assistance in building the export competitiveness of developing States, is essential for facilitating development. In that regard, we look forward to the successful outcome of the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial conference, to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005, at which the interests of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, will be duly considered.

The Republic of Korea supports the launching of a series of quick-win development initiatives. To maximize their outcome, those initiatives should be coordinated with long-term comprehensive development plans.

In a globalized world, health issues are assuming greater importance as the nexus between health, international security and development grows. We have deep concerns about the global community's lack of progress in meeting the health targets of the Millennium Development Goals. My Government believes that the United Nations should play an active role in facilitating the redoubling of efforts by Member States to address health issues.

Climate change is a priority that the whole international community must tackle. As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Republic of Korea has been actively involved in international efforts to reduce global warming gases. We hope that the "beyond 2012" scheme will be agreed upon, with broad-based participation by developed and developing States alike, taking into due consideration the sustainable development goals of each country.

Any threat to one State must be treated as a threat to all; such threats call for a collective response by the entire international community. In countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, our imminent task is to make existing regimes more universal and effective while building our capacity to cope with newly emerging threats. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime remains indispensable in maintaining international peace and security. In that context, we hope that the Secretary-General's recommendations on the NPT will be appropriately addressed at the upcoming Review Conference in May.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the effective verification of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The verification capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency must be upgraded through universal adoption of the Additional Protocol. Stricter control over sensitive nuclear technologies and materials is also needed. However, we must ensure that States parties to the NPT that fully comply with their treaty obligations are guaranteed the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Republic of Korea applauds the adoption of the draft text of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. We pledge our full cooperation in working for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism before the end of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The Republic of Korea supports enhancing the United Nations role in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts through greater cooperation and coordination with regional organizations. Similarly, United Nations peacekeeping operations could be made more efficient through closer cooperation with political missions deployed in the same regions, as well as by better coordination among United Nations offices and agencies in different countries.

As we have already stated, we fully endorse the creation of a peacebuilding commission. However, the proposed sequential model requires further clarification with respect to how we would delineate the various stages in the continuum from post-conflict to development. The mandate and funding options for a peacebuilding commission also require in-depth discussion. In the light of the merits of a holistic approach to institutional reform, it might be better to discuss this item under the cluster of strengthening the United Nations system.

My Government greatly appreciates the Secretary-General's serious efforts to highlight the significance of human rights in today's world, giving them equal standing with security and development. It is high time for us to come up with more effective ways to protect and promote human rights. In this vein, we fully back the initiative to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As a founding member of the Community of Democracies, the Republic of Korea strongly supports the idea of establishing and strengthening democratic institutions. My Government looks forward to intensive discussions on the detailed operational modalities and monitoring mechanisms of the proposed democracy fund.

In our view, the concept of "responsibility to protect" should receive serious consideration on our part. We must explore ways to deter and prevent massive or systematic violations of international human rights or humanitarian law in failing or failed States. While the sovereignty of a State should be fully respected, this should no longer be an excuse for the international community to shirk its responsibility to prevent massive human catastrophes. We earnestly hope that the General Assembly will engage in a thorough debate to elaborate this emerging yet crucial concept.

We also concur with the view of the Secretary-General that Member States must cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court and other war crimes tribunals. That includes apprehending accused persons and surrendering them to those bodies upon request.

My Government is a strong supporter of a comprehensive, holistic reform of the United Nations that would enable it to respond more effectively to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. The position of the Republic of Korea on Security Council reform is well known. We support an expansion of the number of elected seats only — not permanent seats — and we support an improved version of model B as a basis for negotiations among Member States, with a view to reaching a broad consensus. Any successful reform must make the Security Council more broadly and equitably representative, effective, efficient, democratic, accountable and transparent. We believe that model A would seriously undermine those essential goals.

First, the idea of adding permanent seats runs counter to the principle of broad and equitable representation, because it would critically reduce the opportunities for medium-sized and small States to be represented in the Security Council.

Secondly, an expansion involving six new permanent seats would constitute a formidable impediment to the effective functioning of the Security Council. The six new permanent members, together with the existing five permanent ones, would constitute almost half of the Security Council membership. The parochial interests of those 11 countries could complicate the Council's decision-making process.

Thirdly, it is very unlikely that the creation of another category of permanent seats would enhance the transparency of the Security Council's work.

Fourthly, history teaches us that there is no accountability without periodic elections. Given the tremendous difficulty of attempting to correct a fait accompli in the structure of the Security Council, we have serious doubts about the viability of any review mechanism. Periodic elections are the only legitimate means of ensuring the accountability of Security Council members. An expansion of the number of permanent seats runs directly counter to the goal of a more democratic and accountable Security Council.

Last but not least, we would like to dispel the misapprehension that Security Council members represent the interests of the regions from which they come. The truth is that Security Council members have mostly represented their own national interests.

On 31 March, a group of countries proposed a plan of action regarding Security Council reform. We have reservations about that approach. The process is not likely to meet with success, but it will create serious divisions among the general membership, thereby casting a shadow on prospects for the summit in September.

We know that Security Council reform is very important in terms of both the future of the United Nations and the long-term national interests of many countries. We have not yet exhausted all opportunities to pull together the various and divergent views on this matter and negotiate among Member States in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. We do not support any artificial deadlines or a rush to decision on Security Council reform. We urge all Member States to engage actively and constructively in deliberations and negotiations to evolve a broad consensus on Security Council reform.

With regard to the proposal to set up a human rights council, we also recognize the growing need to reform the United Nations mechanism for dealing with human rights. However, given its significant implications, we are still reviewing the proposal in detail and will make comments at a later date.

The role of the Economic and Social Council in coordinating economic and social bodies, particularly in implementing the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, should be reinforced. In the meantime, the idea of expanding the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and establishing an executive committee warrants careful consideration.

We welcome the initiative to enhance the competence and accountability of the Secretariat. My delegation is eager to see more detailed plans for rejuvenating the Secretariat, including long-term projections and strategies. Regarding a one-time staff buyout, my delegation can go along with it only if it can be implemented without additional resources.

In closing, Mr. President, I am confident that, under your able guidance, we will achieve substantive outcomes with respect to the major event in September. My delegation reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the ongoing efforts to revitalize the United Nations, and we pledge our active participation in, and contribution to, the discussions ahead.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): I would like to begin my remarks by expressing the deepest condolences of the people and the Government of Nigeria to the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, and also to the Principality of Monaco on the death of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

I would also like to convey our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having organized this plenary meeting to discuss the Secretary-General's report (A/59/2005) as part of the process of preparing for a successful summit next September.

Nigeria associates itself with the statements made at the beginning of this debate by Malaysia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; Jamaica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; and Malawi, on behalf of the African Group. I would nonetheless like to make the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

First, we commend the Secretary-General for his report, which reflects his personal experience, strength of conviction and understanding of the Charter of the Organization. His views and recommendations represent a welcome vision for a strong and effective United Nations, which the successive reports he has been submitting to the General Assembly since 1997 have echoed. Obviously, those recommendations touch on vital issues and areas that will merit careful assessment in the course of deliberations among Member States.

Secondly, as we have previously expressed in our statements, Nigeria recognizes the strong link among peace, security and development. That is also clear from the Secretary-General's report, which echoes in part the views enunciated in both the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and in the Millennium Project report. For us in Nigeria — as, indeed, for other developing countries — development should be at the centre of global action to eradicate poverty, combat diseases, promote peace and security and ensure environmental sustainability. We therefore look forward to the discussion of those issues in the next round of consultations.

Thirdly, Nigeria believes that the special needs of Africa must be addressed — a fact that is amply recognized by the Secretary-General. For us as Member States, the challenge is therefore to translate words into concrete action. Africa expects accelerated implementation of the various initiatives launched bilaterally and multilaterally to support the continent's development. For their part, African countries have demonstrated their commitment to economic and political reforms. We have aligned the programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development — our flagship continental development framework — with the Millennium Development Goals.

The international community should complement our efforts by providing structured technical support and effectively deployed financial support and access to the global market. Africa needs debt cancellation, as no growth can take place with a heavy debt burden. We therefore expect that the September summit will go beyond unfair stereotypes of Africa by taking decisions on the proposals contained in the Millennium Project report, which Nigeria fully supports.

Fourthly, I would like to reaffirm Nigeria's overall support for the revitalization of United Nations institutions. In that regard, we note the proposals of the Secretary-General to strengthen the General Assembly. As the highest deliberative organ of the United Nations, the Assembly has in the past used its important convening power to influence, if not shape, the global agenda and global action. Any reform of this organ should seek to reinforce its role in line with Charter provisions.

With regard to the Economic and Social Council, it is our desire to see the Council assume prominence as a moral voice on international economic and social matters. The Secretary-General's views on the Council's role in coordination, in policy review and in guidance on economic and social matters are undoubtedly significant in that regard. So is the suggestion that the Council should hold an annual ministerial assessment of progress towards achieving internationally agreed development goals. We are, however, still studying the implications of the recommendation to biennialize the Council's high-level segment and how that would affect the flexibility that would be required to respond to emerging global social and economic issues.

Concerning the Security Council, Nigeria supports the proposals for expanding its membership to make it more representative and more democratic and an efficient organ of the United Nations. As was stated by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the African Member States, Nigeria reiterates its conviction that Africa deserves a minimum of two permanent seats on an expanded Council. The September summit should provide our leaders a unique opportunity to address that important matter and other aspects of comprehensive United Nations reform.

Nigeria also notes with interest the Secretary-General's views on human rights. We reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and enjoyment of those rights by the Nigerian people and our support for United Nations instruments and institutions established to enhance their enjoyment by all peoples. We are, however, carefully studying the proposal concerning the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a Human Rights Council, particularly its wider implications for all Member States.

Reform of the United Nations will be incomplete unless we as Member States take a bold position in support of system-wide coherence, consistency and coordination, as the Secretary-General has observed. We also believe that the principles of democratic governance, accountability and transparency should underpin the operations of the United Nations and of its agencies. For too long, developing countries have canvassed for such a position in various forums, particularly with regard to international financial and trading institutions.

Nigeria believes that the forthcoming summit should send a clear message to the Hong Kong ministerial meeting on trade to be held in December 2005 on the need to conclude the negotiations on the Doha Round in 2006.

Finally, there are ideas and recommendations reflected in the report whose implementation could affect the nature and balance of power and responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. They could also redefine the intergovernmental character of the Organization. Such an outcome should be driven by the hopes and aspirations of Member States. The

Organization emerging from this common endeavour will deserve our support, defence and sustenance. I want to assure you, Mr. President, that Nigeria will be involved in that process by participating actively in subsequent discussions under the methodology outlined in your letter dated 24 March 2005 and amended yesterday.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): We share the overwhelming sense of loss felt around the globe on the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. As President Khatami stated in his message,

> "Pope John Paul II, with his mastery of religious mysticism, philosophical contemplation and poetic and artistic creativity, exerted every effort for the triumph of truth, justice and peace."

I would also like to express our condolences to the people and the Government of Monaco on the demise of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III.

We applaud the Secretary-General for his leadership of the Organization, his dedication to its principles and objectives and his courageous efforts to defend its integrity and to enhance its efficiency and its capacity to meet the needs and challenges of the new century. We owe him our deepest gratitude and unreserved support in these trying times.

The report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" is an important initiative that deserves our thorough consideration and comprehensive deliberation. As one important input, together with others — particularly the views of Member States — it can help us proceed with the huge task ahead, resulting, one hopes, in genuinely meaningful and adequately balanced United Nations reform.

We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for leading the extensive consultations with Member States in the preparatory process for the September high-level plenary meeting, in keeping with the road map that you have outlined for us. My delegation, along with many others, participated in those deliberations in a genuine attempt to actively contribute to enhancing the efficiency of our unique and irreplaceable Organization.

We were indeed astonished that, to a very large extent, the Secretary-General's report neglected not only the views of the majority of Member States and important groups such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Group of 77 (G-77), but also the demand of the overwhelming majority of world public opinion for less coercion and more compassion. It is therefore our earnest hope that those aspirations and the views of Member States will be adequately considered in the remainder of that process. It is self-evident that the legitimacy and relevance of the eventual outcome will be a function of how thoroughly the reform will be deliberated upon and to what extent the process will be all-inclusive and transparent.

The report has diagnosed some of the diverse and interconnected threats afflicting the world community. However, by taking at face value the predominantly publicized interpretations of the threats emanating from one dominant global perspective, the report has lost sight of what is probably the more fundamental threat that lies at the root of the current international maladies, namely the propensity to resort to coercion and violence by State and non-State actors. Furthermore, and perhaps because of that failure, it is far from certain that the prescriptions presented by the report would, or even could, enhance the capacity of the international community to address the very threats that have been identified, or whether they would rectify the present shortcomings of the United Nations machinery or further entrench them. Success will largely depend upon our collective courage to question the feasibility and practicality — not to mention the legality and rationality — of the dominant interventionist paradigm and tendencies. Doing so would make the Organization truly responsive to the repeatedly articulated demands of the overwhelming majority of our peoples across the world, who have time and again rejected war, intervention and imposition.

My delegation has already presented its positions on major issues before us in our statements of 27 January and 23 February at the informal meetings of the General Assembly. We would also like to associate ourselves with the statements made by Malaysia and Jamaica on behalf of the NAM and the G-77. But may I take this opportunity to briefly address certain aspects and some recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General.

As the President correctly summarized in his concluding remarks on 24 February, there is broad consensus that Article 51 of the Charter should not be reinterpreted or rewritten. Thus, it is indeed inexplicable to see that, contrary to the will of the majority and against the entire legislative history of the Article and post-Charter practice and *opinio juris*, Article 51 has in fact been reinterpreted in the report. Such a broad reinterpretation of the Article fails not only the test of legality but even the criterion of prudence, since providing a pseudo-legal excuse for unilateral pre-emptive action can only exacerbate the atmosphere of tension and crisis that has beleaguered the international community.

The report argues that "Lawyers have long recognized that [Article 51] covers an imminent attack as well as one that has already happened." (*A/59/2005, para. 124*) It is evident that, from a purely legal perspective, nothing can be further from the letter or the spirit of the Charter or the opinion of independent jurists. Various judgments of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in various cases have emphasized that measures in self-defence are legitimate only after an armed attack occurs. Article 51 in no way covers imminent threats, and international law does not confer any legitimacy on the dangerous doctrine of pre-emption. Even from the standpoint of politics and prudence, which presumably the report attempts to address, if that dangerous license is infused into the practice of the United Nations, it will lead to greater resort to violence in the international arena by opening the way for major Powers, as well as regional bullies, to wage wars against others under the pretext of self-defence against a variety of assumptions and perceived threats that can be easily and flexibly described as imminent.

The international community has seen far too many cases of resort to the excuse of imminent threat as justification for aggression to allow it to be recognized as a license for war under the Charter —be it from the justifications used by Saddam Hussein for his aggression against Iran and Kuwait to the now discredited justifications presented for the more recent military adventurisms. An attempt to broaden the license to legalized coercion is in itself indicative of the failure to recognize the root causes of the current international crisis, that is, militarism and the propensity to resort to exclusion, coercion and violence on the part of States as well as non-State actors.

Turning to disarmament and non-proliferation, the report contains a number of important suggestions that need adequate scrutiny. We concur that the current threats to international peace and security arising from the continued existence of thousands of nuclear warheads in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States "entails a unique responsibility" (*ibid., para. 98*) for nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, the crisis of confidence and compliance with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) originated in the non-compliance and discriminatory practices of nuclear-weapon States over the past 35 years. However, the report fails to place the blame where it is due. It is even more regrettable that the report has failed to address the recent plans for the development of new nuclear weapons and new doctrines for their use against non-nuclear-weapon States.

The report prescribes the addition of new discriminatory restrictions on access to peaceful nuclear technology, which will, in turn, lead to a further categorization of haves and have-nots within the NPT. However, it neglects the fact that any greater reward for non-membership in the NPT or further disruption of the balance between rights and obligations of NPT members under the non-proliferation regime will lead to its disintegration rather than the intended strengthening.

The report also makes reference to a discriminatory and politically motivated initiative outside the framework of the United Nations and the non-proliferation regime, which undermines both and can achieve only — if it can achieve anything — possibly the political objectives of that initiative. In that regard, the approach that has been accepted by the membership of the Assembly is, in the words of resolution 59/69, the "promotion of multilateralism".

Also, in referring to the issue of missiles, the report should have taken into account the resolutions of the United Nations on missiles that have called for consideration of the issue in all its aspects.

Combating terrorism as a multifaceted global menace requires a global, inclusive and comprehensive approach. Terrorism is a heinous and perverted product of the global order, and the associated mentality glorifies military might as the source of legitimacy and denigrates the principles of international law, ethics and morality as cumbersome constrictions on the exercise of power. Terrorism can, and must be, destroyed, first and foremost by reversing the logic of violence and coercion and changing the mentalities and perceptions that might makes right. It certainly cannot be eradicated — indeed it can only flourish — by further entrenching such a mentality through removing the limited existing restraints on the use of military might and portraying a picture that law, one way or another, must submit and conform to the reality of power. Approaches to terrorism focusing wholly on military, police and intelligence measures therefore risk undermining efforts to promote the role of law and human rights and alienate large parts of the world's population, thereby weakening the potential for collective action against terrorism.

To be effective, any anti-terrorism endeavour or initiative, rather than addressing only selected aspects of that threat, should be a broad-based approach to adequately addressing issues such as the root causes of terrorism and the double standards by which some terrorist groups are being treated. It should also consider proper mechanisms to rescue that much abused term from those who use it as a pejorative term for any dissent from their policies.

In fighting terrorism, the rule of international law, as well as the basic principles of human rights and humanitarian law, must be strictly observed. In that context, we consider the Secretary-General's proposal to create a special rapporteur who would report to the Commission on Human Rights on the compatibility of counter-terrorism measures with international human rights laws, to be a positive and helpful initiative.

The threat of organized crime is no less pressing than the menace of terrorism. Drug trafficking, as a clear manifestation of organized crime, is closely linked to terrorism, affects the security of all States and contributes to civil wars. It often serves as the main source of financing for many terrorist groups. It is regrettable that this obvious threat has been neglected in the report.

Many delegations in the course of our deliberations underlined the imperative of recognizing the increasing threat posed by mutually reinforcing phobias, leading to a catastrophic eventuality of a clash between civilizations and cultures. It was emphasized by many that this phenomenon is today serving as a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism and needs to be duly recognized and properly addressed in any effort to reform the United Nations. It is indeed astonishing that, in the report, that major and emerging security threat has been totally neglected and that the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations, already approved by this Assembly as the most efficient means to tackle the growing threat of a clash, has been overlooked.

If undue pressure had not made it impossible to assess more objectively the threats that face the international community, it would not have been difficult to agree that the lofty objectives of larger freedom, development, security and human rights for all would be much better served through the promotion of dialogue, rather than providing a more comfortable license for pre-emption and the use of force.

The report also accepts the vague and highly controversial concept of "responsibility to protect", which has been the subject of a wide range of interpretations. Clearly, the international community cannot and should not sit idly by when faced with the heinous crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, as indicated in the report of the High-level Panel, one of the main reasons for the failures of the United Nations in tackling such crimes in certain cases has been the lack of will on the part of certain major Powers, which have prevented the United Nations from taking appropriate measures in those well-known cases. Therefore, it is not clear that the introduction of a new concept, rather than a more faithful implementation of the United Nations Charter in that regard, has the first-order priority in the quest to meet such threats. There is a grave concern that the concept of "responsibility to protect" could be invoked by certain countries to pursue their own political agenda and that, through that idea, some parts of the world may become potential theatres for their intervention.

Reference should also be made here to the general demand of the international community for respect for sovereignty. We must demystify that concept and apply the same standards of modernization in its interpretation. In other words, sovereignty cannot be restricted, under the guise of conforming to the needs of the twenty-first century, to allow intervention, while at the same time the same sovereignty is expanded to its nineteenth century parameters to relax the restrictions on the use of force and allow pre-emption.

We share the Secretary-General's feeling on the diminishing credibility of the Commission on Human Rights. We also concur with the Secretary-General that human rights is a crucial aspect of the work of the

United Nations, while further believing that the politicization of the Commission's work has risked engaging nations in a global clash of cultures between North and South and between East and West. Moreover, the Commission on Human Rights has been a textbook case of political manipulation through gross selectivity and the application of double standards over the past several decades.

To restore the credibility of the human rights machinery and to best combine its efficiency with legitimacy, concrete steps must be taken to reduce selective approaches. A pertinent question arises as to whether the proposed human rights council would be able to rectify the present shortcomings of the United Nations human rights machinery. In our view, such a council could further polarize and politicize the human rights system and, in turn, further marginalize the developing countries in yet another important forum within the United Nations.

The establishment of an intergovernmental peacebuilding commission within the framework of the United Nations is an important idea that merits careful consideration. Such a new body, if established, would need to perform its important duties under the purview of the relevant organs of the United Nations, especially the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. As enumerated by the Secretary-General in his report, such a body's functions should be strictly confined to post-conflict activities.

Of course, the United Nations should play a significant role in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding to save millions of lives. It could have prevented the deaths of millions of people in different conflicts. Therefore, we should ensure that the United Nations has an effective capacity for peacekeeping operations to meet the growing demands. To that end, we associate ourselves with the Secretary-General's view on the necessity of strengthening the United Nations peacekeeping capacity and support the appropriate measures that would serve that purpose.

The rule of law, as an essential element of durable peace in countries emerging from conflict, should be respected by all relevant actors in a peacekeeping operation, especially by the United Nations peacekeepers and peacebuilders, who have a solemn responsibility to respect the law themselves and, especially, to respect the rights of the people whom it is their mission to help. In that regard, we strongly support the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the internal capacity of the United Nations to exercise oversight of peacekeeping operations in order to prevent any misconduct in the future.

We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal on the need for the completion of the Doha Round and his emphasis on the need for the round to fulfil its development promise. We are also glad that the report recognizes the need for the international trade and financial systems to be more inclusive of the developing countries' interests through their enhanced participation in the decision-making processes of those institutions. However, some of the huge stumbling blocks in the process of integrating the developing countries into the international trade system have not received proper attention. For example, the report does not touch upon the need for removing political barriers in making the World Trade Organization a universal body paving the way for all developing countries to benefit from international trade. The report equally falls short in proposing ways of addressing unilateral sanctions.

While the report tries to have a comprehensive approach to global environmental degradation, it clearly fails to provide broad recommendations to address the challenge. The relevant recommendations of the report are focused on only three issues: energy, international environmental governance (IEG) and the Kyoto Protocol, and, thus, are not all-encompassing. The report does not provide any proposals for addressing the problems arising from the export of polluting technologies from developed to developing countries, the conduct of transnational companies and the issue of corporate responsibility and accountability. In regard to the Kyoto Protocol, we expected the report, instead of proposing further commitments for developing countries, to call on the big emitters of green house gases to join the Kyoto Protocol and to urge developed country parties to the Protocol to take immediate and effective measures to meet their mitigation commitment in the first commitment period.

The proposal of the Secretary-General on the governance of the global environment requires an in-depth and thorough analysis, since there are differences of view with regard to the root causes of global environmental problems. The issue of international environmental governance, including a new global entity or agency on environment, was dealt with comprehensively in the IEG process leading to the Johannesburg Summit. Choosing among various available options, that process proposed that that the Summit consider the important but complex issue of universal membership; and the Summit, in turn, mandated the General Assembly to consider, at its sixty-first session, the issue of universal membership of the United Nations Environment Programme's Governing Council. We look forward to the active participation of all countries in the discussion of universal membership of the Governing Council at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

It is imperative to reform the Economic and Social Council in order to enhance its efficiency and responsiveness and to enable it to meet the emerging challenges. The proposals contained in the report which seek to have the Economic and Social Council focus more on development issues are worth considering. However, these should not alter the mandate or the scope of the work of the Economic and Social Council, as set out in the Charter. Care should be taken to strengthen the Economic and Social Council and to avoid downgrading it to a functional commission. We should bear in mind that the Economic and Social Council is entrusted with system-wide coordination responsibility, as well as with mandates relating to social, economic, human rights and environmental issues.

On reform of the Security Council, we have noted that the Secretary-General has wisely abstained from directly advocating any models for increasing the membership of the Council. However, the lack of reference to the working methods of the Council — despite the insistence of the majority and against the backdrop of the large amount of work done by the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council — is unjustifiable. Encroachment by the Council on issues that fall within the purview of other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, has regrettably become commonplace. Nonetheless, the report has not only ignored this burning challenge, but has also recommended entrusting the Council with new mandates, which would further exacerbate the situation.

On the revitalization of the General Assembly, which is undoubtedly at the heart of the reform of the Organization, my delegation is of the view that this should be perceived as a dynamic and ongoing process. The two features of this process — enhancing the authority and role of the General Assembly and improving its working methods — should be pursued simultaneously. By the same token, we concur with the Secretary-General that the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, must become more effective through an enhanced contribution to the Organization's activities. However, that may not necessarily be realized by streamlining its agenda and committee structure or by reversing its decision-making process. Rather, it is imperative to restore the powers of the Assembly derived from the Charter, particularly through leaving areas which are within its purview — namely, law-making and norm-setting— to this most democratic forum of the Organization.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasize that, in my delegation's view, it is the sole responsibility of United Nations Member States to decide on any new measures concerning the United Nations and its reform, and that the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the Organization, has a unique role in this regard. We reiterate our pledge of full cooperation with you, Mr. President, as you continue to lead us in this process.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. We also fully associate ourselves with the intervention made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia on behalf of the States members of the Group of Eastern European States. My delegation wishes to add several brief observations and comments in its national capacity.

We very much welcome the right and proper emphasis that the Secretary-General, in his report (A/59/2005), has put on three great purposes and pillars of the work of the United Nations: security, development and human rights. My country, through its recent experience of social and economic transformation processes, is a clear example of the fact that major progress on one of the three pillars can be achieved only if substantive steps are also taken in the other two. Also of particular relevance, as we can testify, is the Secretary-General's argument about the crucial importance of the rule of law, which, together with its successful implementation, is the necessary prerequisite for sustainable reform and key advancement with regard to all three pillars.

In line with efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Slovakia strongly agrees with the Secretary-General that each country has primary responsibility for its own development — strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place policies and investments to drive private-sector-led growth and to maximize domestic resources available to fund national development strategies. By adopting effective measures in those areas, Slovakia has gradually moved from being a recipient of development assistance in the early 1990s to its current situation as an emerging donor country that is now providing official development assistance to about 14 partner countries in the Balkans, Asia and Africa. We have been supporting those countries' institutional capacities, infrastructure and living and environmental conditions, as well as sharing our own experience of the ongoing transformation of our economic and social system. An open and equitable trading system is of the utmost importance for economic growth and poverty reduction. Slovakia, as a member of the European Union, also provides duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports from least developed countries.

My country, which is fully committed to its legal obligations and to respect for human rights, welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals focused on the strengthening of the United Nations human rights system and on the improvement of the institutional framework for human rights. We strongly support the idea of strengthening the capability of the human rights bodies in the field of implementation, effective promotion and monitoring of adopted measures. We also support efforts aimed at increasing respect for and the credibility of the human rights bodies. In this regard, Slovakia supports the strengthening of the role and the improvement of the financing of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and looks forward to the High Commissioner's upcoming presentation of his plan of action.

The close relationship between security and human rights also requires improved interaction between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Security Council. We consider the proposed transformation of the Commission on Human Rights into a responsive and efficient standing Human Rights Council to be an initiative that merits further consideration and elaboration, especially with regard to the new council's membership and statute. We think that having the General Assembly elect the members would contribute to making the council a more representative and respected body.

In the area of the institutional reform of the United Nations system, we support and welcome the proposed concept of three councils, each equally important. We also wish to express our strong support for the idea of creating a Peacebuilding Commission. We see it as a prerequisite for doing away with the existing institutional gap. The urgent need to maintain peace and security in post-conflict situations and to achieve long-term sustainable social and economic development must be addressed appropriately.

As we have repeatedly stated on previous occasions, Slovakia strongly advocates reform of the Security Council. First of all, the Council needs to be made more representative, more effective and more transparent. Its working methods need to be enhanced. In that context, we also believe that the Security Council needs to be expanded in both categories of its membership: permanent and non-permanent. The present membership structure is clearly unbalanced and does not truly reflect the composition of the United Nations or the principle of equitable geographical representation. We wish to reiterate our explicit position that an expanded Security Council should include Germany and Japan as new permanent members.

In that regard, Slovakia finds it inappropriate that neither of the two models proposed for Security Council reform by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and referred to in the recent report of the Secretary-General reflects the existing structure of the regional groups. I refer specifically to the existence of the Group of Eastern European States. We wish to emphasize that all existing regional groups should be maintained and that they should be able to nominate candidates for membership of an expanded Security Council.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Assembly of my Government's keen support for the reform proposals so well outlined in the Secretary-General's recent report. We are committed to making the September summit a success by engaging in detailed discussions and negotiations with other Member States, thereby assembling all the building blocks necessary to make the United Nations a more effective and more dynamic Organization that is able to effectively address the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Ms. Tahir-Kheli (United States of America): I should like to begin by expressing to our colleagues from the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See, our colleagues from the Permanent Mission of Poland and indeed to all those who looked to Pope John Paul II as a spiritual guide my country's deepest sympathies on his passing. He was an inspiration to the devotion of people of all faiths throughout the world and a force for good everywhere he travelled. He will be greatly missed. I also express to the ruling family and the people of the Principality of Monaco my country's deepest sympathies on the passing of Prince Rainier III. We share in the mourning of his family and his countrymen, and we pray that they will find consolation in his formidable legacy.

The United States appreciates the work of the Secretary-General and your efforts, Mr. President, to achieve reform of the United Nations. I am grateful for the opportunity to present my country's views on this effort.

At no time has the world been more in need of an effective United Nations than it is today. As we work towards the achievement of the Millennium Summit's Development Goals, as we work for peace around the world, especially in Africa and the Middle East and as we confront the challenges of terrorism and the urgent need to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, we need a United Nations that lives up to its high ideals, a United Nations that acts effectively to implement real solutions, and a United Nations whose efficiency and integrity are beyond question.

We welcome the Secretary-General's positive emphasis on the importance of promoting freedom and respect for human rights and human dignity, advancing democracy and strengthening the rule of law. We appreciate the Secretary-General's support for the creation of a United Nations democracy fund, as proposed by President Bush last year. When it is created, the democracy fund will be instrumental, as President Bush has said, in laying the foundation of democracy by instituting the rule of law and independent courts, a free press, political parties and trade unions.

We also welcome the call made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005) for the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission to improve the Organization's post-conflict peacebuilding capabilities — a proposal that merits serious and careful consideration. There appears to be broad support for the establishment of such a commission, and we want to work with like-minded countries to ensure that it can fulfil its important mission. The Peacebuilding Commission could become a centrepiece of the United Nations to help strengthen post-conflict States and, as such, could become a key component of peace and security in the twenty-first century. It should be answerable to the Security Council. We recognize that its structure and organization must reach beyond the Security Council. It is vital that such a commission include in its membership both those with the most at stake and those with the most to contribute. We are prepared to discuss those issues.

The United States supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller, more effective Human Rights Council and to have that council report directly to the General Assembly. Because we agree about the need to improve the capacity of her Office to promote rule of law on the ground in countries, we look forward to the plan of action from the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It will assist all Member States in assessing how best to ensure that critical human-rights work not be hamstrung by bloc voting or by those States that systematically violate human rights.

We also appreciate the emphasis that the Secretary-General's report places on dealing with the issue of terrorism, particularly including its call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the 12 existing counter-terrorism conventions and its call for the completion — without delay — of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. We welcome the position that there is no justification for the targeting and killing of civilians, and we continue to believe that a definition of terrorism needs to exclude State military operations. We also recognize that any definition or other language to be included in the comprehensive convention on terrorism will need to be worked out by States in the context of the negotiations on that convention.

We welcome the Secretary-General's acknowledgement that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a real and growing threat. We also welcome the Secretary-General's reaffirmation of the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the specific reference to the crisis of confidence and compliance facing the Treaty. States failing to abide by their treaty obligations have created a serious challenge for the non-proliferation regime that must be addressed.

The United States is pleased to see the support given to the Proliferation Security Initiative and to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as useful new initiatives to combat the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including by non-State actors. We also welcome the report's call for universal adoption of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Model Additional Protocol and its enrichment and reprocessing programmes because of the proliferation dangers posed by such weapons. We support the report's focus on national controls against delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, as the proliferation of missiles and related technologies to unstable countries is an area of great concern to the United States.

The United States also welcomes the report's emphasis on additional steps to address conventional weapons that are destabilizing. We believe, however, that the discussion of nuclear States as bearing the greatest burden for addressing the proliferation and disarmament challenges facing the international community is incorrectly cast.

We welcome the Secretary-General's assertion that Article 51 of the Charter should not be changed. The Secretary-General's report makes the key point that a State need not wait until it is actually attacked in order to use force in self-defence, which is to say that there is a right of anticipatory self-defence in appropriate circumstances. Anticipatory action is an element of the inherent right of self-defence that remains lawful under the United Nations Charter. As we have indicated previously, today that right of self-defence must be understood and applied in the context of the new threats posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction that the Secretary-General highlights in his report.

Economic development is of great concern to all United Nations Members. Indeed, President Bush has made clear the United States commitment to sound economic development. We reaffirm and commit ourselves anew to implementing the development consensus achieved at Monterrey and at Johannesburg and to the agreed goals of the Millennium Declaration.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that developing countries should recommit themselves to taking primary responsibility for their own development by strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place policies and investments to drive private sector growth. World leaders acknowledged that principle of national responsibility at the 2002 Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development. The great promise of the Monterrey Consensus was that, if developing countries implemented good governance and sound policies emphasizing the rule of law, respect for human rights and a liberal, market-based economic structure, the resources that they need for development would follow — from trade, from foreign and domestic private investment, from sustainable debt and from official development assistance.

The Monterrey Consensus also called upon developed countries to support developing countries making efforts to improve their institutions and policies. The United States pledged to increase foreign assistance by 50 per cent above the 2000 levels by the year 2006 and met that pledge three years early. Last year, our development assistance exceeded its 2000 level by 90 per cent. The United States Millennium Challenge Account initiative will support poor countries that are committed to governing justly, investing in their people and encouraging economic freedom. We believe that this approach will make aid more effective. The Millennium Challenge Account initiative was developed to meet our commitments under the Monterrey Consensus, an approach endorsed by the Secretary-General. That integrated approach is far more promising than insistence on official development assistance supply targets. We urge other donors to provide increased aid to developing countries that implement sound, transparent and accountable national development strategies.

Like the Secretary-General, we too recognize the special needs of Africa. Under the auspices of the Millennium Challenge Account, we are contributing substantially to poverty reduction through economic growth and good governance. The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act has brought investment and jobs in many African nations and has helped establish necessary commercial linkages for those nations to enjoy greater economic opportunity. We remain committed to building an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS and call upon the international community to join us in providing the resources needed for that effort.

In addition, we urge World Trade Organization members to complete the Doha Round by 2006, if possible. We caution, however, that finding the right structure for open and free markets — one that will contribute positively to increased development and opportunity — is more important than the constraints of a calendar.

Further, debt sustainability is about a country's ability to pay in the context of becoming an active partner in global capital markets. We must also bear in mind the role that debt plays as a financing tool for development; debt financing is appropriate only where there is a reasonable expectation that loans will be repaid. The approach outlined in the report would set back many countries' progress towards achieving or regaining access to capital markets.

Recent investigations of mismanagement and wrongdoing, including in peacekeeping operations, are cause for concern and have underscored the need for greater transparency and accountability within the United Nations. We therefore strongly support strengthening the authority and the independence of the Office of Internal Oversight Services as a means to accomplish that.

The United States supports Security Council reform provided it enhances the effectiveness of the Council. We remain open to considering all proposals and will evaluate them against that benchmark. As the reform process proceeds, the United States would like to move forward on the basis of broad consensus along the lines we have previously stated and without artificial deadlines.

As we prepare for what will be a very busy September, I would like to reiterate our position that the high-level event to be held on the margins of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly should not become the focal point for United Nations reform. We continue to believe that its principal focus should be on the implementation of the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

We want to move forward now on United Nations reforms for which there is broad agreement. We should also recognize that there are areas where agreement will not be reached quickly or easily, and we should not be bound by artificial deadlines. Given the historic significance and the complexities of the enterprise that we are embarking on, it would be unrealistic to adopt a package approach to United Nations reform and development goals. The United States believes that we should instead approach this task in a pragmatic way, building consensus around reforms we all agree are needed and then progressively working to achieve more difficult changes.

Mr. President, you have the commitment of the United States to work constructively and cooperatively on all issues of United Nations reform. To that end, we will continue our process of review to identify any additional areas of possible reform, and we encourage others to do the same.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the United States remains committed to the United Nations and feels it is critically important for Member States to help the United Nations meet the challenges and the promise of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Before all else, allow me, on behalf of Romania, to join in the expression of heartfelt condolences at the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the first pope ever to have visited a predominantly Orthodox country such as mine. We also share in the grief at the passing of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III. I convey our deepest sympathy to the ruling family and the people of the Principality of Monaco.

Mr. President, we thank you for convening these plenary meetings on the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) and for your leadership in providing us with a procedural framework in the lead-up to September's United Nations summit.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Luxembourg presidency on behalf of the European Union and obviously supports the Eastern European Group's statement prepared by the Estonian presidency for the present month. We ourselves have also discussed reform-related issues at some length on previous occasions in plenary meetings. I believe that there is no point in taking up again those points which are already a matter of record.

Let me say straightforwardly that Romania values the Secretary-General's vision of reform. The "In larger freedom" report is a remarkable political and intellectual blueprint for putting that vision to work and a good account of what we all aim at: effective multilateralism.

The report is also an excellent exercise in mainstreaming the flow of ideas, options and proposals that is usually expected to flourish at times of major change. We would therefore be well advised to take it as the platform upon which consensus can be achieved on decisions that meet the expectations surrounding the September anniversary summit. If time — the time of political opportunities — is a factor here, we should now focus on elaborating further or fine-tuning some of its concepts, so as to enable the delicate balance that has been achieved in the report to be maintained and not disturbed.

There is indeed a compelling harmony and symmetry and a logical attractiveness in the report. Its most praiseworthy achievement is that it properly recalibrates the relationship among the key goals of the Organization — development, security and human rights — and the relationship between the corresponding pillars of the United Nations architecture.

We agree with the general approach taken by the report, which is based on the triad of development, freedom and peace, as their interlinkage is of a defining nature for the current international agenda.

The report highlights the urgency of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and contains a number of practical recommendations. We agree with the conclusion reached in the Secretary-General's report that developing countries should recommit themselves to improving governance and implementing development strategies, and that developed countries should undertake to support such efforts. We welcome and support those proposals as well as those on strengthening basic health systems, enhancing international response mechanisms to major infectious diseases, and establishing a worldwide early-warning system for all natural hazards.

We regard the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission as particularly useful and look forward to considering a more fully elaborated proposal on this topic.

As impressive an achievement as the report might be, we, as representatives of Member States, also have to actively engage in the process of adapting the United Nations to new realities, including through further refining our assessment of the proposals made by the Secretary-General, by submitting them to a series of crucial tests. One such test — probably the most fundamental one — is whether the reform envisaged in the report does more than adapt the United Nations to the challenges and opportunities of the post-cold-war era. Will it be able to win the hearts and minds of our peoples and fire up their imagination once again, as was the case at San Francisco? Will it be a satisfactory answer to their hopes and dreams, and will it elicit a genuine recommitment to the idea of a world Organization?

Will this reform bring the United Nations closer to our regions, to our countries, to our peoples? It is the answers to such questions that we need to convey to our Governments, to our constituencies, to our opinion-makers.

There is no doubt that the goals of the United Nations represent our finest ideals and aspirations. The question is, to what extent can the institutional framework we possess today really deliver on these common objectives and values? While the report does an impressive job of examining ways to reorganize key bodies of the United Nations in the context of a more integrated matrix, it does not — as the Secretary-General himself cannot — contribute significantly to the issue of improving the performance of the General Assembly. This is the central body, the flagship of the Organization, the only venue where we are all represented. The measure of the performance and image of the United Nations is inextricably tied to the capabilities of its General Assembly. It is therefore up to us — each and every Member State — to enhance those capabilities and to make the General Assembly's work more focused and more relevant to contemporary issues.

Another test relates to the report's — and, implicitly, the reform's — level of ambition. More than a few of our colleagues have noted that many of the ideas that garnered significant support in the course of our previous consultations do not seem to have found their way into the report. It is only reasonable, therefore, for us to ask ourselves whether the report is more, or less, ambitious than those common denominators identified in the debates on reform held so far.

In terms of the process, we could at this time benefit from greater clarity in the decision-making that takes us from this point — at which we have a whole set of valuable ideas on reform — to the point where appropriate draft decisions are set out on the tables of our leaders in September.

Likewise, Mr. President, we appreciate the valuable facilitation process you have set in motion, and we support the initiative to devote dedicated efforts to promoting the reform package outside of New York, including with the valuable assistance of highly qualified special envoys of the Secretary-General.

In recent discussions in the Eastern European Group, however, we could not but note with disappointment that, once again, those envoys have been selected from each of the other four regional groupings. None comes from Eastern Europe, and no appeal was made, to our knowledge, to the 22 delegations making up the Group to put forward suitable names. We are, unfortunately, compelled to recall once again that the High-level Panel comprised 16 personalities, only one of whom came from our region. Have we in Eastern Europe completely run short of personalities who could be of assistance to the United Nations, including by bringing the Organization's agenda closer to our people?

Now is as good a time as any to state clearly that the United Nations is still working on the basis of five, not four, regional groups. The High-level Panel's proposals on mergers between the regional groups have not been taken up in the "In larger freedom" report; they have been met with broad reluctance by delegations, and, in any case, it is not for an expert panel to decide how Member States are to organize themselves, especially when the latter have not been consulted.

So let us acknowledge clearly that that proposal is a thing of the past and let us seriously start thinking afresh, bearing in mind the fact that 22 States Members of the Organization are watching the reform process with the same critical eye, the same expectations of fair and just treatment, and the same sense of entitlement as their colleagues from other regional groups.

That leads me to revisit the question of Security Council reform and to state once again that the Eastern European Group has to be considered as an integral part of any expansion scheme. For countries like Romania — which also have to take part in the process — expansion of the Council can be supported, in terms of structure, provided it reflects the increased contribution of the Eastern European Group to United Nations activities, and, in terms of substance, provided it brings us at least one inch closer to better decision-making in a more representative and authoritative Council, and one inch closer to a fairer recognition of contributions to the safeguarding of international peace and security.

Our expectations are indeed minimal. One additional elected seat would indeed be a very modest allocation, since in that case we would end up with one permanent and two elected seats, which, according to basic arithmetic, adds up to much less than one fifth of the number of countries represented in an expanded Council. If that is not a spirit of compromise, if that is not a constructive approach, then I do not know what would be. In any case, before we aim to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of each country, let us respond properly to, at least, the aspirations of the main regional constituencies of the Organization.

The framework laid down in the "In larger freedom" document with respect to reform of the Security Council is certainly a step in the right direction compared with previous efforts. We appreciate also the initiatives of those countries that are working actively to seek the widest basis for agreement on the way forward with regard to expanding the Security Council. We will embark upon the next stage of the process without preconceived ideas but with a firm stand on the points that are fundamental to our Group and to our countries. We recognize that major contributors to the primary functions of the Security Council need to be acknowledged in the process. At the same time, a future formula for an enlarged Council should have as many — if not all — of the Member States and their peoples on board as stakeholders. Romania will support ideas and initiatives that can effect change in that regard.

We agree that the overall reform of the United Nations should not be dependant upon the ability to take decisions on the enlargement of the Security Council. Among the elements in the report entitled "In larger freedom" that we think need to be and can be further developed, Romania favours a broader and deeper reflection in the reform package of the outline of the comprehensive prevention of and fight against terrorism, of the nexus between that scourge and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and of the enhanced relation we think needs to be worked out between the United Nations and regional organizations.

On the latter, it is impressive to see the foresight of the founding fathers of the United Nations when they drafted Chapter VIII of the Charter, since regionalization was then a far cry from today's realities of robust organizations and intense integrative processes. However, we are still not making sufficient use of the potential inherent in the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. If we were, the conjunction of complementary resources available today in that relationship would be sufficient to adequately manage and even put off all the crises and tensions confronting us. What is true in the area of security also applies in other dimensions of global activity, such as development.

Romania, which promotes United Nations regional cooperation in conflict situations as a flagship theme of its elected tenure in the Security Council, is willing to be helpful in further developing the ideas contained in the latest report and is prepared to come up with a concept paper addressing issues such as the following.

First, how would it be possible to generate new integrationist processes where appropriate and make existing ones more meaningful or intense as a result of the emulation potential that is inherent in global-regional interaction.

Secondly, how can we ensure that the very provisions of Charter VIII are actually observed in the first place and implemented in a more orderly manner, not leaving everything to empirical solutions. For instance, the United Nations has, more or less implicitly, subcontracted to regional organizations the solution of a series of conflicts that have not subsequently been subjected to any oversight by the United Nations, as prescribed by the Charter, with the consequence that those conflicts have largely been forgotten or, at best, subjected to complacent reassurances that they at least remain frozen and have not yet reignited, as if that approach should be seen as politically or morally tenable.

Thirdly, recognizing that regional organizations are increasingly playing a separate role alongside individual States, the contributions of the latter to action taken by the former under a United Nations mandate should also be recognized as a contribution to United Nations peacekeeping or to peacebuilding proper.

In the long run, it is important that we at the United Nations do not conceive relations with the most active and effective of regional or subregional organizations in competitive terms but that, rather, we seek to find how the United Nations can broaden its reach, strengthen its impact and ultimately bring its agenda closer to peoples' specific needs and concerns by interacting with and supporting regional undertakings and ensuring the overall consistency of those processes.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, allow me first to express our heartfelt condolences upon the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco. During the 26 years of his papacy, the late Pope strived consistently for world peace through mediation and conciliation for peaceful solutions of regional and internal conflicts, as well as for an easing of tension. He made great efforts to promote inter-faith dialogue. Upon his visit to Japan in 1981, His Holiness visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki and appealed for nuclear disarmament.

We appreciate the thoughtful plan of work and the consultation mechanism that you, Mr. President, have shown us for the preparation of the September summit, following the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom". Sixty years on from the inception of our Organization, this coming September the Member States will be asked to take important decisions for its rejuvenation and change, for new commitments and empowerment that will make our Organization more effective and better equipped to deal with the problems of the twenty-first century. In that task of historic importance, my Government fully supports the Secretary-General and will work in close cooperation with you, Mr. President, and your facilitators.

My Government commends the efforts of the Secretary-General to present us with bold and concrete proposals that aim to strengthen the roles and function of the Organization around its core missions and objectives, namely, development, peace and security, the rule of law and the protection of the vulnerable. We also commend his effort to present us with a matching set of concrete proposals and ideas on institutional reform, in particular that of the Security Council. It is now up to Member States to move, in collective action and with boldness and speed, on the recommendations laid before us as a broad integrated package. Out of deep commitment to the United Nations, and working under your wise guidance, Mr. President, Japan will spare no effort to find agreement that will benefit all Member States.

We strongly support the central thrust of the report of the Secretary-General, namely, that development, security and human rights are closely interlinked and must be advanced together. That corresponds exactly to the spirit and concept we have been advancing — that of human security — which holds that it is only through the protection and empowerment of individuals that the freedom to live in dignity can be achieved.

Today I would like to limit my remarks to a few general points that my Government considers of particular importance. I look forward to detailed discussions later in the month in the cluster-by-cluster meetings.

First, on development, which is clustered under the theme "freedom from want", no issue deserves closer attention than the hardship faced by many hundreds of millions living in extreme poverty and destitution in many parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The international development agenda is broader than the Millennium Development Goals, but the Goals must figure as the most pressing priority. Japan is strongly committed to contributing to their realization, working with the countries concerned and with bilateral and multilateral donors and development partners, both within and outside the United Nations.

In addition to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, in our approach to the Millennium Development Goals we will be guided by the discussions held and the agreements reached on that issue at numerous international conferences, including those held at Monterrey and Johannesburg. In terms of priority sectors geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Japan has played a leading donor role in the areas of education, water, public health and the environment. We will continue our efforts, with special focus on those areas.

Furthermore, in the belief that nation-building begins with capacity-building, Japan attaches importance to assistance for capacity-building, particularly in the areas of education and training. Advancing capacity-building is essential in order to promote a sound sense of ownership, which is indeed indispensable for achieving both the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

On the important question of financing for development, we have argued that resource mobilization, to be effective and sustainable, must cover not only official development assistance (ODA), but also all other available sources, such as those available through trade and investment and those from domestic financial resources in the recipient countries. East Asia's development experience offers an interesting example in that a happy combination of development financing that consisted of ODA, trade and private investment produced an environment in which healthy economic growth and sustainable development were made possible, which in turn helped to reduce the population living in poverty by more than 200 million over a decade.

Japan's strong commitment to development aid and cooperation through its ODA remains unchanged. Backed by that commitment, Japan has contributed about one fifth of the worldwide volume of ODA over the past 10 years. From humanitarian relief, such as that provided in the wake of the recent tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, to Millennium Development Goal-related undertakings and international development beyond the Goals, Japan will continue its efforts to be the world's major donor. We will strive to increase the level of ODA for the purpose of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, taking proposals by the Secretary-General seriously into consideration.

For international development and the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals, cooperation with non-United Nations actors, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, is also important. The G-8 summit will focus this year on Africa and we will be working closely with our partners in the G-8, including on development financing and debt relief. I wish also to note that, later this month, the Asia-Africa summit will be held in Indonesia, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference of 1955. Japan will announce its position with regard to strengthening Asia-Africa cooperation, including South-South cooperation in the development area.

Concerning the threats posed to humanity by natural disasters, we commend the Secretary-General for stressing in his report the importance of measures for disaster reduction and early warnings. We believe that the international community, through the United Nations, needs effectively to address that problem of huge concern to a number of countries, particularly in the developing world.

On the issue of peace and security, clustered under "freedom from fear", we welcome the concrete proposals by the Secretary-General to strengthen multilateral frameworks for disarmament and non-proliferation. My Government has taken a number of initiatives, in close cooperation with other members of the international community, in that area. We support the universalization of the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, as well as instruments for the suppression of terrorism, strengthening their effectiveness and ensuring their full implementation. We welcome the adoption last week of a draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, the early agreement on which was no doubt facilitated by the Secretary-General's report.

On nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held next month to review its implementation — a very important conference, as the NPT regime faces serious challenges. Through that Conference and other international forums, we will continue to take active initiatives in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation out of a desire to contribute towards improving the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

We support the idea of a peacebuilding commission and hope that it will be one of the important outcomes of the September summit. Japan is keenly mindful of the importance of peacebuilding, as seen in its efforts to advocate the consolidation of peace and human security. We support the thrust of the Secretary-General's suggestion concerning the commission's composition and its functions, including drawing an equal number of members from both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to participate in the commission. We look forward to a detailed note from the Secretary-General, including on a peacebuilding support office.

Thirdly, concerning the freedom to live in dignity or the protection of the vulnerable and the rule of law, we commend the Secretary-General for raising the rule of law, human rights and democracy as one of the important pillars for the United Nations, along with development and peace and security. Japan embraces the assessment of the Secretary-General that, in light of the experience gained in the post-cold-war period, the time is now upon us to look into the issue of "responsibility to protect". However, even if military intervention as a last resort cannot be completely excluded, we are of the view that there are many instances in which measures other than military means can and should be exhausted by the international community to deal with a given situation, and that will have to be further explored. We need to re-emphasize here our concept of human security, to which I alluded before, that puts primary emphasis on the protection and empowerment of individuals as a basic guiding principle to realizing prevention and the consolidation of peace in post-conflict situations.

We agree with the emphasis that the Secretary-General's report places on human rights, making more robust the United Nations activities aimed at improving human rights situations all over the world, and we look forward to active discussions in that regard. Concerning the proposal for a human rights council, we share the key concerns that lie behind that proposal, while, at the same time, further discussions on the details are clearly needed.

Regarding institutional reform, the Secretary-General has put forward a number of important proposals and suggestions which all deserve careful, sympathetic study; they include proposals for the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the Secretariat. We welcome those concrete and bold proposals.

Reform of the Security Council has been discussed for more than a decade now, and the time is ripe for action. The Secretary-General reiterates his belief that "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council" (*A/59/2005, para. 169*), and urges Member States to agree to take a decision before the summit in September. He also states that, although consensus would be preferable, if we are unable to reach consensus, "this must not become an excuse for postponing action" (*ibid., para. 170*). We fully support those views. History tells us that important progress is made rarely through consensus, but through bold decisions. It should be recalled that the decision to expand the membership in the non-permanent category back in 1963 was made by vote.

We have argued for the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories in order to make it more representative and capable of addressing current and future challenges more effectively. That position enjoys support from a large number of Member States, as their statements in the General Assembly have shown. That approach is reflected in model A. We also believe that developing countries would be represented better in an expanded Security Council, including with permanent seats. We welcome the African Union's recent agreement on its position based on the expansion in both categories, and we support the addition of two African States as new permanent members.

Against that backdrop, Japan, together with other like-minded countries, will move the process forward by putting forth a draft framework resolution by this summer, with necessary action to follow, in order to take a decision on the expansion of the Security Council. In that process, we naturally intend to work in close synchronization with you, Mr. President, and your facilitators so that a solution that will command the widest possible agreement can be arrived at on that long unsettled problem.

In expanding the Security Council, we should also address another important concern of Member States that has been debated for a long time and is ready for some harvesting, which is improving the working methods of the Security Council. We hope to move on that issue as well, in close consultation with all interested Member States.

Concerning the reform of the Economic and Social Council, we believe the reform effort should be guided by the concern to make that important body more responsive to focused discussions on issues that are of high urgency and priority. Such reform, if achieved, should enable the Economic and Social Council to better develop useful and meaningful guidelines for United Nations activities in the economic and social areas.

Turning to reform of the Secretariat, we welcome the many ideas for such reform, in particular proposals that would contribute to the reallocation of existing resources. The reallocation of existing resources should be respected as a guide in any review within the Secretariat, with a view to making the best use of limited resources in meeting new tasks and responsibilities. The proposed review of old mandates is welcome. On the question of staffing, the need to refresh and realign the staff to meet current needs is warranted, and we would like to continue consultations with the Secretariat on how best such reallocation can be implemented, in principle within existing resources.

Furthermore, we support the strengthening of the authority of the Secretary-General in implementing reform, and welcome efforts to improve the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat. We look forward to further constructive discussions in this regard.

These plenary meetings mark the beginning of an earnest preparatory process for the September summit. In conclusion, I would like to quote from the statement made by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during the general debate in September. He said:

> "The time has come to make a historic decision to reform the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular.
>
> "Time is limited. Our future — the future of the United Nations — is at stake. I would like to call upon the members of this body to work together and take a bold step towards the creation of a new United Nations for the new era." (*A/59/PV.4, p. 33*)

Japan will spare no effort in working with other Member States to achieve that end.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like first of all to offer our condolences on the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

The United Nations is not merely on the verge of reform — it is already in the process of reform. I would like to take a slightly different approach to making my statement. The delegation of Belarus supports the timetable and structure for our general work and for making critical decisions that you, Mr. President, have proposed, with a view to giving the United Nations a new image. We welcome your initiative, your foresight and your sincere determination to make this crucial process truly open and fair.

My delegation has taken to heart your appeal for us to work as professionally as possible by making brief statements and introducing concrete proposals. The vision of the delegation of Belarus with regard to a number of important national priorities in the context of United Nations reform is set out in a written statement, which will be made available to delegations. Additional material contained in the annex to that statement sets out the position of Belarus on the expansion of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.88

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting

Thursday, 7 April 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping .... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 45 and 55 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005)

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 19 States members of the Rio Group: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

These meetings signal the beginning of the second phase of the preparatory process for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly, to be convened pursuant to resolution 58/291 to assess progress towards fulfilment of the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and towards integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major conferences and summits of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

In that context, the Rio Group would like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), submitted in response to the request of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General notes that in preparing that report, he drew on his eight years' experience as Secretary-General, on his own conscience and convictions and on his understanding of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as on the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the report of the Millennium Project.

The Rio Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his contribution to the debates that Member States are holding at this important moment for the United Nations. The Rio Group believes that the report of the Secretary-General deserves constructive consideration by all Member States. The negotiations on reform will require great flexibility in the search for agreements and consensus.

The Rio Group also believes that September's summit must provide an opportunity to fulfil our commitment with respect to the validity of multilateralism as a way to address the challenges we face in our fight to eradicate poverty and hunger and to promote the economic and social development of our peoples, and because of the need for an effective concept of collective security and respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all people, whose well-being must be at the centre of our concern.

In that context, the September summit will provide a special opportunity for an objective analysis of our Organization's functioning after 60 years of existence and for the adoption of the bold new

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normative and institutional measures needed to adapt the unique tool that is the United Nations to the challenges brought by the new millennium.

In that context, the countries members of the Rio Group would like to express their complete readiness to collaborate fully so that, in this new phase of international relations, the United Nations can play its rightful role in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development and the protection and the promotion of human rights.

The Rio Group believes that, during the intergovernmental consideration of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, we should continue to broaden our focus on social and development issues, emphasizing issues covered by the major United Nations conferences and summits that paid special attention to improving all people's living conditions and strengthening respect for their human rights. We also believe that the various situations affecting middle-income countries and small and vulnerable economies must be given due consideration in the outcome of the 2005 summit to ensure that, in 2015, they will be making progress in their efforts to provide better living conditions for their peoples and not sliding down a dangerous slope towards growing poverty and marginalization, which we see today.

From that perspective, we wish to emphasize that market access and the progress of the Doha development round have never been, are not and never should be presented as linked to any conditionality. Any approach to the issue must continue to explore the problem of our countries' external debt, linking the important concept of debt sustainability not only to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but also to the "MDGs-plus", or additional millennium development goals. We understand that such an emphasis on development issues must also include the profound interrelationships among sustainable development; the stability of economic, political, social and environmental systems; democracy; the universal enjoyment of full human rights; internal and external peace; and security, including in the event of natural disasters.

The Rio Group also wishes to highlight the importance of the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" initiative, which, among other things, envisages a set of innovative development financing mechanisms to increase current official development assistance levels in accordance with the commitments and agreements undertaken and contained in the Monterrey Consensus.

The Rio Group agrees with the Secretary-General — and has stated— that there is an urgent need for developed countries that have not yet done so to establish timetables for achieving the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance and to ensure that such assistance will promptly reach countries that are falling further behind in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. We repeat: the goal is only 0.7 per cent of gross national income.

Finally, with regard to reform, the Rio Group believes that the progress that can be made at the normative level must be supported by coherent institutional changes that facilitate the implementation of agreements reached in the areas of development, security and universal human rights protection.

For our Group, democracy is a universal value. Therefore, we reiterate that — as our Presidents stated at the summit held at San José, Costa Rica — the consolidation, preservation and promotion of democracy are fundamental prerequisites for equality, justice, freedom, peace and the sustainable development of our peoples. As Chair of the Rio Group, Argentina thanks the Secretary-General for mentioning that principle.

The Rio Group also recognizes that it is important for the United Nations to hold a debate on the international community's response to cases of massive human rights violations or genocide. Special attention must always be devoted to preventing genocide or massive human rights abuses. Such a debate should encompass a legal framework that conforms to the Charter of the United Nations.

For our Group, any reform of the Organization must assign priority to strengthening the rule of law and respecting and promoting human rights. The Rio Group agrees with the Secretary-General that the rule of law is strengthened by universal participation in international instruments for the protection and promotion of human rights. Furthermore, the Rio Group is prepared to consider strengthening human rights institutions, given that the Commission on Human Rights requires reform.

The Rio Group views with interest a General Assembly debate on the use of force in accordance with the Charter.

The proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission is an important issue that should be thoroughly debated by all Member States within the framework of the General Assembly.

For our Group, the fight against terrorism requires that we arrive at a definition of terrorism in the convention currently being formulated. That will enable us to face that scourge from a multilateral perspective and with a unitary focus. The dimensions of human rights and due process must always be present in the fight against terrorism.

Furthermore, the Rio Group is concerned at the increase in transnational organized crime — which we believe to be closely linked to terrorism — and the global problem of the illicit narcotics trade, which undoubtedly affects the security of all States. We agree with the Secretary-General, who calls in his report for all States to ratify and implement the conventions punishing all such illicit activities.

Reform of the Secretariat must make it more effective and efficient. Reform must strive to make it more transparent with monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It must seek ethical and professional excellence. That is why we want to know about the plan that the Secretary-General will implement to attain those objectives. We will actively participate — both as a group and as individual States — in the General Assembly's assessment of existing mandates and structures to improve the distribution of resources and to avoid duplication.

The countries members of the Rio Group commit themselves to working creatively and constructively in the various consultations and negotiations during the intergovernmental process that begins today.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): At the outset, let me affirm our full support for the statement delivered by my friend the representative of Samoa on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

We are distributing to delegations the full text of our remarks, which is significantly longer than the text that I will deliver in the interests of brevity.

We unequivocally welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). It contains action-oriented and ambitious measures that, taken as a whole, can effect significant improvements to the United Nations and its ability to respond to the diverse threats and challenges facing us in the twenty-first century.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General has provided a clear direction for discussion at the High-level Meeting in September and a comprehensive package of concrete outcomes for consideration. We must seize the unique opportunity he has given us to adopt watershed reforms of the United Nations. Failing to reach broad agreement on a comprehensive reform package would be a severe blow to our shared interests in improving international cooperation.

I would also like to register Australia's and my own personal appreciation for the leadership that you, Sir, have shown in the preparatory process, including by convening this meeting today, and to offer our encouragement and ongoing support for your efforts to guide Member States towards an agreement able to advance our collective interests in a stronger, more effective United Nations. I offer these remarks, Sir, as one of your humble facilitators.

There are many Member States interested in responding to this important report by the Secretary-General and, in Australia's usual tradition of getting to the point quickly, I will only go so far today as highlighting some of the most important elements of our more comprehensive statement, which is being circulated.

The Secretary-General's report rightly acknowledges the special needs of Africa. Nevertheless, we must ensure that the summit outcome also recognizes pressing development needs elsewhere, including in the Asia and Pacific region, where some two thirds, or 700 million, of the world's poor live. There needs to be recognition of the specific development needs and challenges facing small island developing States, as agreed in the Mauritius Strategy. Economic growth is a powerful driver of development, supported by comprehensive trade liberalization by developed and developing countries alike under the World Trade Organization and Doha round negotiations. We should highlight the importance to development and trade-derived economic growth and ensure that the summit creates a positive atmosphere for any early resolution and concrete outcomes from the Doha round.

Australia agrees with the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening the multilateral framework for arms control and non-proliferation. The summit outcome should — indeed, must — endorse a range of practical measures, including the commencement of negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty; continuation of the test-ban moratorium pending entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; adopting the model additional protocol as a safeguards standard; addressing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction proliferation through expanding the number of countries participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative; the conclusion of a small arms and light weapons treaty; and greater efforts to address the threat posed by the illicit transfer and use of man-portable air-defence systems.

Australia welcomes the comprehensive strategy against terrorism which the Secretary-General announced in Madrid and agrees that concerted efforts should be made to finalize the draft comprehensive convention against terrorism. Australia has also welcomed the recent adoption by the Ad Hoc Committee on terrorism of the text of the convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism and looks forward, following its adoption by the General Assembly, to its being opened for signature on the first day of the summit.

Australia looks forward to more details on the peacebuilding commission, not least given the important role we think it could have in addressing the problems facing fragile States. The establishment of a practical and effective commission should be a key summit outcome.

Australia also welcomes the Secretary-General's endorsement of the emerging norm of the "responsibility to protect" and his call to embrace that norm and to act on it when national Governments are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens. We also support the Secretary-General's proposal to develop greater capacity in the United Nations to assist emerging democracies, and we agree with his suggestions on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of human rights treaty bodies. That is consistent with objectives Australia has pursued for several years and should be undertaken as a priority.

The Secretary-General raises important concerns over the handling of human rights in the Commission on Human Rights. Australia agrees with him on the vital need to elevate and to mainstream consideration of human rights in the United Nations system and looks forward to further discussions on that.

Extensive discussions are already taking place on the need for Security Council reform, and it is imperative that we reach an outcome this year which is broadly acceptable to all. As we have made clear, Australia supports the expansion of permanent membership through the inclusion of Japan, India, Brazil, an African country, and possibly Indonesia.

Australia sees the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a clear threat to international peace and security. As recognized by the Secretary-General, robust action is needed to address the issue of such proliferation, including by the Security Council. Existing and prospective Council members should be prepared to meet the international community's expectations of them in that regard.

Australia has long been a consistent and strong voice calling for improved management and accountability of the United Nations. We see Secretariat reform as indispensable if we are to meaningfully renew the United Nations. We strongly support all of the Secretary-General's proposals on improving the Organization's structure and management methods and consider that such reforms are a major component of the package of reforms under consideration.

The difficult task our leaders face in reaching agreement on improving the United Nations has undoubtedly been made easier by the far-reaching and ambitious reforms put forward by the Secretary-General. Australia considers it imperative that we respond to the Secretary-General's call for action, giving close attention to each of his proposals in a purposeful and constructive way. It is vital that we do not waste this unique opportunity for significant reform of the United Nations and, at all costs, avoid squandering this chance in petty point-scoring or negotiations to the lowest common denominator. We all need to grasp the magnitude and importance of the task we face and, as the Secretary-General has done, respond boldly with a clear vision of our common interests in creating a stronger and better United Nations.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): First, Palau wishes to associate itself with the expressions of condolence, sympathy and sadness for the loss to the world of His

Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of the Principality of Monaco.

We also wish to associate ourselves now with the excellent statement of the Pacific Island Forum group and, in particular, with its reference to the need for urgent attention to the execution of the Mauritius Strategy.

We take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General and his staff for the comprehensive report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", and we reiterate our gratitude to the many experts who participated in the groundbreaking work that resulted in the report on the Millennium Development Goals and the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

The Secretary-General has addressed many issues that are critical to the future of our world's citizens. Palau has also addressed some of those in previous statements, which it reiterates here, including its support for reform of the Security Council pursuant to model A and the permanent membership of Japan. But for the purposes of this short statement, our focus is on the development of Palau and of small island developing States which are similarly situated.

As the Secretary-General has stated, "[O]ne of the great challenges of the new millennium is to insure that all States are strong enough to meet the many challenges they face" (*A/59/2005, para. 19*). The Secretary-General goes on to say: "No country, weak or strong, can realize prosperity in a vacuum" (*ibid., para. 24*).

It is my duty to suggest to this body that just such a vacuum exists in many small island developing States and, more particularly, in the Republic of Palau. The vacuum is caused by the remoteness and isolation of Palau and those other States, and by the failure of the institutions of the United Nations to create a compelling presence within Palau's borders. In truth and in fact, despite the vast resources that have been marshalled by the United Nations and the developed countries to attack the problems addressed by the reports that have been issued, there is not one single permanent United Nations representative in Palau to interact with the Government and with civil society to build the capacity of the State to address the daunting and complicated challenges that confront it.

In his 2003 report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General noted that:

> "Unless developing countries enjoy — and are seen by the global public to enjoy — greater access to, and a voice in, institutions whose policies have a profound impact on the lives of their citizens, the public hostility to globalization … will continue to grow." (*A/58/323, para. 71*)

But where is the access of Palauan citizens to those key international organizations? Where does the flag of the United Nations fly in Palau? Nowhere at all. The United States has an embassy with permanent employees and diplomatic personnel in Palau. Japan has an embassy with permanent employees in Palau. If it is not too small for them to lend a hand, why does it appear to be too small for the United Nations?

While clearly the establishment of regional centres is a useful device, it cannot replace the need for an in-country presence to both spark the interest and enthusiasm of the local populace and to provide ready and willing assistance in accessing and comprehending the vast and complicated opportunities that are available to Palauans beyond their shores. I suggest that every State in the world community is entitled to the permanent presence of at least one talented United Nations official who can guide the local population through the maze. Only then will the requisite capacity be developed. Only then will the young people feel the presence of what otherwise might be thought of as an impenetrable, inaccessible and distant bureaucracy.

It seems to me inarguable that a permanent office in every Member State is the only way to provide the greater access to the world institutions that the Secretary-General has called for. The only reason that this quite practical and obvious solution to the remoteness and isolation of Palau and other countries like it has not been implemented is an argument relating to its cost. It must somewhere be believed that it is better to group United Nations personnel in so-called regional centres and to periodically visit States like Palau, or to bring Palauans to those regional centres for seminars and workshops. I suggest that the cost of those visits is probably greater than the cost of actually locating an official within the State. However, even assuming for the purposes of argument that some slight increase in cost would be occasioned by the development of country offices in remote States, the benefits of such an initiative would far outweigh the costs, for, as the Secretary-General has observed:

> "In an era of global interdependence, the glue of common interest, if properly perceived, should bind all States together in this cause, as should the impulses of our common humanity." (*A/59/2005, para. 2*)

Until there is an actual United Nations presence in each Member State, the people of the world will not perceive their interdependence, and a whole class of States will be left in that abhorrent vacuum, which will undo us all.

Mr. Nimac (Croatia): Thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting of the plenary and for preparing the calendar of work on United Nations reform leading up to the summit to be held in September. The Croatian delegation also extends its thanks to the Secretary-General and to the Secretariat for the report "In larger freedom". My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, but wishes to take this opportunity to provide some brief additional comments on particular aspects of the report.

Croatia subscribes to the sentiment evident in the report of the timeliness of United Nations reform. The art will be in finding the way among the diverse interests of Member States. We believe that this is an achievable task.

Development is a pillar of the United Nations mandate and the Millennium Development Goals are international obligations. As such, we welcome the recommitment to the Monterrey and Johannesburg outcomes and the renewed emphasis upon the achievement of the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance. We consider it important to reaffirm all the outcomes of the United Nations conferences, which form part of the agreed international development framework of which comprehensive debt relief and completion of the Doha round are key additional elements.

The maintenance of international peace and security, and the struggle against terrorism and transnational organized crime are our common concern. "In larger freedom" proposes a range of measures to strengthen the normative basis for State and human security. Croatia will engage constructively in the dialogue to come on those issues.

We are pleased to see the attempt to draw together security and development. To many countries with the experience of conflict, but also that of building national capacities and institutions post-conflict, that link is clear. We therefore welcome the proposal of establishing a peacebuilding commission, which would fill a void in the United Nations system. We await with interest a more detailed elaboration of what is envisaged.

The proposed structure of the peacebuilding commission appears to be restrictive towards small States by limiting membership to leading troop contributors, major donors, the international financial institutes and subsets of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. A modality needs to be found for the inclusion of the legitimate voice of small States that have, by their own experience, spanned the transition from conflict to relief and then to development. Moreover, the report seems to exclude a direct preventative role for the proposed commission. We look forward to further consultations on those issues.

Lasting peace and security can be founded only upon the rule of law. Croatia supports a stronger United Nations role in building State capacity to allow States to deliver rule of law for all their citizens. Responsible States provide safety for their citizens and security to their neighbourhood. Croatia supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights.

Reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda of the United Nations for many years. In relation to the proposed models, the Republic of Croatia supports an expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats. However, Croatia is concerned that the proposals do not foresee the existence of the Eastern European Group. That will not serve a final agreement on Council reform. We also believe that the Eastern European Group, given the growth in its membership in the past 15 years, has an equally legitimate claim, as do others, to an additional non-permanent place on the Council.

Croatia has aligned itself with that part of the statement of the Chairman of the Eastern European Group for the month of April, Estonia, which sets out the common position of the States members of the

Eastern European Group eligible for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.

Reform, if it is to succeed, must justly account for the interests of all and not be or be perceived to be at the expense of anyone. Additionally, reform of the Council must extend to its working methods and its interaction with other principal organs, particularly the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council is not the only principal organ in need of reform. Proposals for the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and linking the mandate of the latter to follow-up on the Millennium Development Goals is an idea worthy of further elaboration. The Secretary-General's report has set in train a discussion which needs to be conducted. The timetable is a tight one, but, with the goodwill of Member States, there is sufficient time for a proper distillation of views.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Permit me to join those who have spoken before me in mourning the untimely deaths of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

Uganda associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the African Group, as well as with the statement to be made by the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic with regard to landlocked developing countries.

The Uganda delegation commends the Secretary-General's report, which outlines a number of important reforms. Time does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the report; suffice it to highlight some few areas.

While I agree generally with the Secretary-General's assertion that the reforms he proposes should be adopted as a package and not be treated as an à-la-carte menu, we see the possibility of not reaching a consensus on those measures, in which case it would be prudent to adopt a practical approach and to forge ahead with those proposals on which we can agree. Quite rightly, the Secretary-General emphasizes that his proposals give equal weight and attention to three great purposes of the Organization: development, security and human rights. It appears, however, that security has taken centre stage and that development is seen from the angle of security, thus giving it a secondary role. In fact, unless issues of development, such as poverty, education, health and the environment, are addressed, one cannot meaningfully talk of security.

In that context, therefore, it is the view of my delegation that the Economic and Social Council should be rejuvenated to play its role, as envisaged in the Charter. To say that, over time, other bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the specialized agencies, have usurped the powers and role of the Economic and Social Council is a defeatist attitude. Both the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies should be adequately funded to address issues of development.

My delegation is happy with the special attention being given to African needs. While the African countries are striving to adopt Millennium Development Goal-based poverty-reduction strategies, the developed countries should fulfil their part of the bargain by contributing 0.7 of their gross national income as official development assistance within a specified timetable. We have heard much rhetoric. It is time for action, and the "quick wins" proposal in the Secretary-General's report is welcome in that regard. Such basic needs as soil nutrients, universal primary education and providing free meals to primary school children — my country has already embarked on those measures — as well as such infrastructure as feeder roads, medicine for preventable diseases, water and sanitation, improved seeds and so on, should be the focus of our development partners. Above all, what is needed is political good will to implement promises already given by developed countries in numerous international forums. My delegation supports the call to complete the Doha round of negotiations by 2006. Africa's persistent demand for access to the markets of the developed countries should be met.

My delegation welcomes the proposed establishment of a peacebuilding commission. It would be useful in preventing countries from slipping back into conflict and strengthening the institutions that promote stability in countries that are currently not experiencing conflicts. It should be well-funded, independent and not an appendage of the Security Council.

We support the establishment of a democracy fund and an international finance facility. However, the democracy fund should be used to support countries' home-grown institutions of democracy and not to import foreign brands of democracy and to use them as a conditionality for accessing the democracy fund. My delegation also supports setting up a $1-billion voluntary fund to provide urgent relief to victims of sudden disasters. Environmental concerns should also be addressed, especially by the developed countries that are responsible for most carbon emissions.

The proposal to do away with the present Commission on Human Rights, which enjoys universal membership, and to replace it with a small body elected by two thirds of the General Assembly is problematic. While the existing body has at times been abused by the provision of membership to some States whose observance of human rights leaves a lot to be desired, proposing the creation of a small body that does not enjoy universal membership is not a solution. A good approach would be to work out democratic and human rights guidelines that countries aspiring to be members should adhere to.

The notion of the "responsibility to protect" is welcome, but its parameters should be well defined to avoid the temptation to interfere in the internal affairs of States. It should be confined to cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and the prior authorization of the Security Council should be obtained before there is such intervention to protect citizens.

Lastly, Security Council reform is overdue. Africa has taken a common position on that issue, which my delegation wholly endorses. We ask for at least two permanent members with a veto and five non-permanent seats.

Mr. Mackay (New Zealand): May I associate New Zealand with the expressions of condolence that have been made on the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Serene Highness, sovereign Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

At the outset, let me express full support for the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Samoa on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

In his report "In larger freedom", the Secretary-General has laid out the key elements for achieving increased security, prosperity and basic human rights for all. The report is a balanced and concise package of priority actions, focusing on changes that are both vitally needed and achievable.

New Zealand strongly endorses the concept of international peace and security resting on three equal pillars: security, development and human rights. We fully share the Secretary-General's view of a world grounded in collective action where problems, threats and opportunities transcend national boundaries and where the reality of our global interdependence is fully recognized.

I will now highlight a number of recommendations that New Zealand particularly supports.

New Zealand largely supports the Secretary-General's recommendations under section II of his report, "Freedom from want". Strengthened action is needed in order to ensure that the international community delivers on its undertakings to reduce global poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We welcome the emphasis which the recommendations give to the importance of governance and sound, transparent and accountable national strategies to reduce poverty, and support the call for developed countries to provide increased development assistance in support of those. We welcome and fully support the impetus the Secretary-General seeks to inject into the Doha development round, and New Zealand supports particularly the recommendations for an intensified response to combat HIV/AIDS.

Gender equality, the full enjoyment of reproductive health rights, and access to reproductive health information and services are crucial prerequisites for development, and New Zealand welcomes the reflection of those sentiments in the Secretary-General's report. Regarding HIV/AIDS, it is crucial that the summit focus on both prevention and treatment of the disease. Obviously universal access to reproductive health information and services, including through the provision of appropriate and comprehensive information to adolescents, is a vital strategy in combating HIV/AIDS.

New Zealand also welcomes the Secretary-General's focus on the need for enhanced action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change, including through commitments by all major greenhouse gas emitters.

New Zealand is concerned that the particular vulnerabilities and special development needs of small island developing States, as most recently recognized in the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting, received insufficient recognition in the Secretary-General's report. It is important that the special case for small island developing States be fully recognized in the summit outcome.

New Zealand welcomes the acknowledgement that global peace and security require progress on both disarmament and non-proliferation, and the practical proposals put forward to achieve this, such as the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty and strengthening the verification authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

On terrorism, we agree with the Secretary-General's proposal to conclude a comprehensive terrorism convention that defines as an act of terrorism any act intended to seriously harm civilians or non-combatants, with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a Government or international organization to do or abstain from any act.

New Zealand strongly supports the principles of "responsibility to protect", which set out clearly the need for collective action against genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

We particularly endorse the proposal for a peacebuilding commission to address the need for sustained action to prevent countries emerging from war from lapsing back into violence. The strength of a peacebuilding commission would lie in a high-level intergovernmental body that could bring together the main strands of peacebuilding and involve a core membership taken from the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, relevant troop contributors and donors. We look forward to a more fully developed proposal from the Secretary-General on the structure of the commission.

We also strongly support increased resources being provided to the Secretary-General for his vital good-offices function. Those activities, often conducted quietly behind the scenes, are underappreciated as well as underresourced.

It is particularly pleasing to see human rights given such a prominent place in the Secretary-General's report. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that a shadow has been cast on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole by the declining credibility and lack of professionalism of the Commission on Human Rights. Therefore, we support the proposal for a high-level human rights council. Whether that new council might be a principal organ of the United Nations or a subsidiary body of the General Assembly — both alternatives having advantages and drawbacks — are issues New Zealand would want to look at closely. Either of those alternatives would represent a radical restructuring of the United Nations human rights institutions and would be worthwhile if they were to provide a solution to the problem of politicization which afflicts the Commission on Human Rights. The members of any future human rights council would need to be much more prepared to deal firmly with human rights violations than the current Commission. Only then would the restructuring of the United Nations human rights machinery not be in vain.

Finally, we fully endorse the need for an expanded Security Council that is more representative of the realities of today's world. We agree that a decision needs to be taken on this before September and that, while desirable, a consensus decision may not be possible. We place on record again our view that Japan's contribution to the United Nations needs to be recognized in any enlargement of the Council and that New Zealand continues to oppose any expansion of veto power in the Security Council.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). First, AOSIS associates itself with the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 on this agenda item.

AOSIS appreciates this opportunity to share our views on the Secretary-General's report and wishes to thank you, Sir, for organizing these consultations, which we believe are timely, in the lead-up to the High-level Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report "In larger freedom", as required by resolution 58/291.

The Secretary-General's analysis in his report has once again drawn attention to issues of great importance. In our view, those issues, together with the recommendations being proposed, require careful study by Member States, considering their far-reaching implications and ramifications. Our comments as a group, therefore, will be confined to general issues of common concern at this stage, but we will be contributing in depth on the specific issues when they arise during consultations on various clusters of the review.

There is perhaps no other group in the United Nations family to which the relevance of international reforms to enhance sustainable development in particular is more meaningful than to the small island developing States. The unique vulnerability of small island developing States to social and economic forces, and particularly to environmental degradation — as well acknowledged in all major international development agendas, including that of the Millennium Summit — requires the consistent attention and support of the international community.

In that context, AOSIS appreciates the focus in the report on the urgent need for comprehensive and global action on implementation, and the general references to small island developing States, particularly in its chapter on freedom from want, in which it makes reference to trade and climate change. We wish to acknowledge the particular attention given to small island developing States in the section on climate change.

Nevertheless, we need to be very careful about lumping categories of countries together. While we recognize the fact that the Millennium Development Goals makes reference to addressing the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing States, we believe that it is inappropriate to gather those different countries into one group and to suggest that there is some sort of action that can address the concerns of them all collectively.

That approach ignores the particular needs and concerns of small island developing States and the fact that one size does not fit all because of their structural handicaps and inherent vulnerability. They should be given the special treatment they deserve to ensure that their concerns are not diluted through clustering with other groups or through the application of the lowest common denominator to all developing countries.

AOSIS appreciates also the recommendation of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and regional capacity. The catastrophic impact of the 26 December 2004 tsunami was an eye opener in that respect.

We stress the need for small island States to be assisted in the development and strengthening of preparedness and disaster risk reduction, emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, particularly in the field, to enhance the capacity of small island States to address post-disaster human settlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

We are most discouraged by the lack of mention anywhere in the report of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. As was pointed out yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Samoa, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, and supported earlier today by the representative of New Zealand, the Mauritius Strategy not only contains action-oriented, concrete and practical measures to address the areas of concern to small island developing States, but also highlights areas of mutual responsibilities to be pursued by them and by the international community — an elemental principle also strongly advocated as important in the Secretary-General's report. The Strategy is of extreme importance to the peoples of small island developing States as they strive to ensure their sustainable development, security and the protection of their fundamental human right to survive in their islands.

It is our view that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be seriously undermined for small island developing States unless appropriate actions to fully implement the Mauritius Strategy are properly considered in the final outcome of the review of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit in September. To that end, it is our intention as Member States to ensure that, over the course of that exercise, that unfortunate oversight is properly addressed.

Speaking now in my national capacity, Tuvalu strongly agrees with the proposal in the Secretary-General's report to strengthen the United Nations organs in order to make the Organization more relevant, meaningful and visible to all Members, including small island countries such as Tuvalu. We agree with the expansion of the Security Council, as proposed in the report.

However, regarding the section on freedom from fear, Tuvalu strongly feels that it lacks one key element. For Tuvalu, security is not simply a matter related to international terrorism or biological, chemical or nuclear weapons; it also relates to security from environmental harm. In particular, the ongoing threat of climate change is a threat to the very survival of Tuvalu and many small island developing States. Substantive inaction by some large greenhouse-gas emitting countries represents a serious threat to our existence. To that end, we believe that environmental security must be a permanent agenda item of the United Nations bodies, including the Security Council.

Speaking again on behalf of AOSIS, let me assure you, Sir, that we will continue to work cooperatively with you in future consultations to ensure a successful High-level Meeting in September.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I would like to begin by expressing the Solomon Islands' condolences to the Holy See on the passing away of Pope John Paul II and to the Principality of Monaco on the demise of Prince Rainer III.

Thank you once again, Sir, for convening this series of meetings as we continue to pursue the challenges of addressing today's threats. Before proceeding further, I would like to associate my delegation with the statements delivered by Ambassador Stafford Neil, Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; by Ambassador Feturi, Permanent Representative of Samoa, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum group; and by my colleague Ambassador Sopoaga, the Permanent Representative of Tuvalu, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Solomon Islands acknowledges the Secretary-General's report and values its input to the United Nations reform debate. My delegation wishes to make preliminary overview comments on the report in its national capacity.

Solomon Islands appreciates the emphasis the report places on development, but notes with regret that not enough is said on the special situation of small island developing States and the least developed countries. To make the multilateral system work, United Nations reform must recognize and address the special concerns of the vulnerable Members of this Organization. Such oversight creates weak links within the international system and somewhat isolates the vulnerable from the process. The Solomon Islands, a small island developing State as well as a least developed country, sits on the periphery of the international system. Countries in such positions have come to rely heavily on certain international frameworks to support and sustain their national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the Brussels Programme of Action and the recent Mauritius Strategy paper, among others.

Against that background, my delegation would like to see the relevant organs of this Organization be performance-based and goal-driven, with clear phases and timelines aimed at monitoring agreed international programmes. That approach corresponds to the decisions made by our leaders at the 2000 Millennium Summit in setting out a series of time-bound Millennium Development Goal targets. To achieve that, resources will have to be made available as soon as practical. The recommendation in the report to have an international financial mechanism to mobilize the necessary resources to implement international and national development strategies and programmes is very much welcome and timely.

The Solomon Islands feels that United Nations reforms should also be sensitive to the political, economic and social status of Member States. The report seems to suggest an approach that is too open for fragile developing States. Such openness should be balanced against State capacities, especially for those that are still undergoing the process of nation-building and seeking a common identity and a sense of national unity. The agreed international programmes speak of their situation; unfortunately, their lack of implementation has placed such countries in an awkward situation.

On the issue of natural disasters, being situated in a volcanic and disaster-prone region, the Solomon Islands welcomes the Secretary-General's call to establish a worldwide early warning system for all natural disasters.

My delegation notes that levels and types of security threats, although interconnected, differ globally. Some threats have received more attention than others. There is a lack of clarity in the report with regard to other threats posed by Member or non-Member States, or within States themselves. Unfortunately, this creates a security vacuum that, if left unattended, could degenerate into a security dilemma, undermining the credibility of the Organization. Solomon Islands believes that there needs to be an agreed mechanism to address this specific threat within the parameters of the Charter.

My delegation continues to have difficulty with the recommendation for a regional conflict-prevention capacity within the framework of the United Nations. As stated in previous regional and national statements during the most recent informal consultations, a region responding promptly to a regional request by a Member State is in conformity with international law and should be encouraged. Regional cooperation is all about pooling resources and assisting each other in order to preserve and uphold global peace and security. Solomon Islands is making this statement against the backdrop of its experience with the Security Council and as a beneficiary of the regional assistance mission to Solomon Islands.

On the issue of the reform of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, the views of Solomon Islands were set out during the most recent informal consultations. I will not, therefore, repeat myself. However, my delegation would like to reiterate its call for the Secretariat to re-examine its recruitment process and adopt a mechanism that allows it to effectively reach out to the Organization's diverse membership. The process as it stands discourages many from applying, especially those from developing countries, because of the costs incurred by potential candidates who travel abroad to undertake recruitment exams. We encourage the United Nations to examine the option of holding exams nationally.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's support for the reform process. We humbly request that the outcome of both the informal consultations and the issues emanating from various cluster discussions be summarized so that we can take stock of where we stand and begin the process of further consensus-building and, where appropriate, negotiations.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): The "In larger freedom" report (A/59/2005) provides a well-balanced and comprehensive basis for making the necessary decisions, during the summit in September, to strengthen the United Nations. It is an excellent basis for our deliberations and discussions. In addition to consultations here in New York, our capitals must be involved at the highest political level in order to achieve the results that are needed.

We have a unique opportunity to take decisive steps towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals, and at the same time ensure a safer and more secure world. We need a reformed United Nations in order to strengthen our collective capacity to deal with the multifaceted security situation in the world today and to be effective partners in development. Changes are required to ensure the continued relevance of the United Nations in development activities.

Development, human rights and security are mutually reinforcing. In general, we welcome the increased focus on human rights. The current human rights machinery is in need of reform, and we welcome efforts to elevate the position of human rights in the United Nations system. More emphasis should be placed on technical cooperation at country level in order to achieve practical results. We note with great interest the initiative to establish a Human Rights Council to make our efforts in this field more relevant and effective. We welcome the intention to enable a permanent body to more effectively address evolving human rights situations. However, there is a clear need to develop this idea further in order for us to be able to conclude that it is preferable to a Commission on Human Rights with universal membership.

There will be no peace without development, and no development without peace. It is vital to develop the Organization's capability and capacity for preventive action. It is Norway's view that steps should be taken to strengthen the Secretary-General's role and capacity in preventive diplomacy. The good offices of the Secretary-General can play an even more important role in mediation efforts to end conflict.

The international community must agree on a more consistent and coherent approach to peacebuilding. The proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission could be a step in the right direction. However, the mandate, organization and function of such a commission must be clarified. We look forward to further proposals from the Secretary-General in this respect.

We support the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Support Office. The main purpose should be to ensure more coherent planning and operational peacebuilding capacities within the United Nations system. The operational functions of such an office should have priority over Secretariat services for the Peacebuilding Commission.

The current discrepancy between what the Members of the United Nations task the Organization to do and what they contribute financially needs to be addressed. Increasingly complex peacekeeping mandates need to be matched by increased funding — ideally in the form of assessed contributions, or at least more predictably than today. The proposal for a peacebuilding fund could assist in this respect, if such a fund is properly mandated and widely supported with the necessary resources.

When a State ignores its responsibilities towards its population, the international community must not remain passive. The international community has a responsibility to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other means to help protect the human rights of civilian populations. When such means are not sufficient, the Security Council has the responsibility to take action under the Charter, with authority, with efficiency and without hesitation in situations of mass atrocity. We endorse the Secretary-General's appeal to embrace the principle of the "responsibility to protect" as a norm for our collective action in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We must build greater consensus around the need for collective action and early diplomatic response, which can eliminate the need for military intervention.

Reform is needed to ensure the authority, legitimacy and efficiency of the Security Council. The expansion of the Council is necessary, but Norway has some concerns about both models referred to in the Secretary-General's report. We have doubts about the viability of the new regional election groups that form the basis for both models; this will make it much more difficult for smaller countries to be elected — even countries that contribute substantially to the United Nations and make the largest voluntary contributions. The issue of Security Council expansion could possibly be dealt with in a separate process, perhaps in several stages.

The need to improve the humanitarian response system is another key element in the Secretary-General's report, especially as regards response capacity, funding and security and the right of access for humanitarian personnel. We share the Secretary-General's goal of a more predictable humanitarian response in all emergencies and hope that his report and the comprehensive expert review to be finalized this summer will contribute to concrete improvements. Norway will continue to support the strengthening of field coordination structures, including the leadership of the humanitarian coordinators and the role of the country teams, which, where appropriate, should include all Inter-Agency Standing Committee members.

The need for more predictable funding raises a number of complex issues. It would be preferable, in our view, to build on existing mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, in order to ensure available funds for rapid disbursement and to avoid delays in acute emergency situations.

The challenge of providing sufficient funds for an adequate international response to all humanitarian needs, including forgotten emergencies, disaster preparedness and so on, should be addressed in the broader perspective of the need to increase the total volume of donor contributions. It goes beyond the mere technical task of setting up a fund, even one of such impressive proportions.

We agree with the basic premise that further joint efforts to meet the MDGs must be based on the Monterrey consensus. Simultaneous efforts in many fields are required to reach the MDGs — on the domestic side, national development strategies, strengthened governance, the rule of law, and measures for combating corruption and securing resource mobilization. These are all areas that would benefit from the participation of civil society and the private sector.

Simultaneous efforts in many fields include resource mobilization and increased official development assistance. We welcome the renewed focus on the 0.7 per cent of official development assistance target. We urge all creditors to support the call for intensified debt relief, without jeopardizing the long-term viability of the international financial institutions. The increasing number of countries that are working hard to create an enabling environment to achieve the MDGs deserve support and positive feedback. Other developing countries may still need the support and attention of the international community and of the United Nations.

To make sure that national planning is substantiated by more predictable funding, we would encourage donors to make predictable multi-year pledges. More predictable funding of United Nations operational activities should be pursued. This will facilitate better planning and results at the field level. We want to ensure the continued relevance of the United Nations in development activities. The United Nations needs to join forces with other donors in broader undertakings and to harmonize and align its programmes with national strategies.

We welcome the focus on gender equality in development issues, but we would also like to see a focus on gender equality and the role of women in efforts to promote peace and conflict resolution.

We support the importance of gender equality and access to sexual and reproductive health services, both as a critical requirement for women's empowerment and as a component of strong public health systems, as highlighted in the report. We support the recommendation on access to reproductive health care and stress the need for the decision makers in September to reiterate the crucial importance of universal access to reproductive health care by 2015. This is necessary in order to improve the appalling state of maternal health and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as to contribute to women's empowerment.

We are also pleased to note that environmental issues are included. As shown by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report, the increasing pressure on the ecosystems on which we all depend is putting achievement of the MDGs at risk.

We have before us a package of necessary reforms that in general enjoy the solid support of the United Nations membership. In spite of substantive agreement in the General Assembly, we, too, often note that the implementation of these important decisions is blocked or heavily modified when the budgetary implications are dealt with in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and in the Fifth Committee. We urge Member States to follow up their engagement in the debate leading up to the Summit with a similar commitment in the Fifth Committee to ensure that what we agree on actually becomes a new reality for the United Nations.

We support the Secretary-General's proposals for administrative reforms. We frequently see that Member States are able to micro-manage the Secretariat through the Fifth Committee. No management can be effective under such circumstances. We should aim to limit our management of the Secretariat to giving it broad guidelines, and in return demand transparency, accountability and tougher audits.

Finally, Sir, Norway wishes to pledge its full support to you, in your capacity as the President of the General Assembly, as you take on the crucial task of leading us through consultations concerning the outcome document to be endorsed at the highest level in September. We also support your repeated statements concerning the need for transparency and openness. This is a crucial year for our Organization. We cannot afford to fail, and we must remain ambitious.

This is indeed a time for all Member States to pull together.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Mr. President, let me thank you once again for giving me the floor to speak on behalf of the 31-member Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. We welcome the way in which you are conducting the current consultations, which, we trust, will be maintained throughout the high-level plenary process. We are confident that, under your competent guidance, our preparatory work for the high-level event will have a successful outcome.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the great efforts he has exerted in making the comprehensive report available for our deliberations in a timely manner. We believe that a number of the analyses and recommendations outlined in the report will provide an important input to the substantive preparations for the high-level event.

We are happy to learn from this report that, over the past two decades, global extreme poverty has been reduced dramatically and that hundreds of millions of men, women and children the world over have been able to emerge from poverty and begin to enjoy improved access to food, health care, education and housing. Yet we cannot but feel concern at the fact that today more than a billion people still live on less than a dollar a day; that, every year, 11 million children die before their fifth birthday; and that 3 million people die annually from AIDS, to cite just a few examples.

We are of the view that the situation can be reversed and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reached only if multilateral cooperation is enhanced, great dynamism and political will shown, and development embraced by all States as the top priority on the international agenda.

It is gratifying for us to see that MDG 8 in particular is dealt with in the report. That goal is regarded by the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries as the most essential aspect in the achievement of the MDGs. Unfortunately, the targets set out under Goal 8 are not fully covered by the report. In other words, the report, no matter how inclusive it may be, fails fully to address the special needs of the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, the most vulnerable of all, as the Goal itself calls for.

In our view, the global partnership for development should not be confined to some commitments of the Monterey Consensus. Rather, it should take a broader and more comprehensive approach. Under resolution 58/291, the high-level meeting is mandated to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made not only towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including the internationally agreed development goals, but also in relation to the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, as well as the global partnership required for their achievement.

Needless to say, one crucial dimension of the global partnership for development is addressing the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Those three vulnerable groups of countries constitute almost half the United Nations membership and represent the poorest segment of the international community. Those countries are lagging far behind the international development mainstream because of the specific structural and geographical challenges that constrain their capacity for development.

The international community has made tremendous efforts to identify their special development needs. The General Assembly has an agenda item on those countries every year. It has convened conferences to identify their special development needs and agree on international support measures to address those problems.

Due to their vulnerabilities, those countries are in very difficult and special situations compared to the rest of the world. That is why there are three distinct programmes of action designed to suit their respective special situations. Therefore, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should be closely linked to the international efforts to implement the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Almaty Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Mauritius Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. We strongly believe that the successful implementation of those commitments will no doubt significantly contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, allow me further to elaborate on the situation of landlocked developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action and recent Assembly resolutions recognize that the main developmental constraints for landlocked developing countries are the lack of territorial access to the sea, their remoteness and their isolation from major international markets, prohibitive transit transport costs, heavy dependence on transit services and on the conditions of transit neighbours and the small size of their own markets.

The Almaty Programme of Action offers specific actions grouped according to five priorities, including infrastructure development and maintenance, a transit policy framework and international trade and trade facilitation so that landlocked developing countries can secure access to the sea by all means of transport without hindrance, reduce trade transaction costs, thus improving competitiveness, and addressing problems related to delay and loss along transit routes.

The Almaty Programme of Action also calls on the international community to extend the necessary financial and technical assistance to both landlocked and transit developing countries to ensure the full and effective implementation of those priorities. Implementation of those specific measures should serve as the basis for addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries.

We are pleased to see that the report mentions the need to build the trade competitiveness of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States through implementation of their national Millennium

Development Goals strategies, with an emphasis on investment in agricultural productivity, trade-related infrastructure and competitive export industries. The importance of regional infrastructure and policy cooperation for supporting economic development, particularly for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, is also stressed.

However, having reviewed the report in its entirety, we regret to say that the issue of landlocked developing countries still needs special emphasis and completeness.

In the implementation of Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, which addresses the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, a specific set of measurements and indicators should be applied to quantify progress. There is no question that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved unless the urgent needs of the three most vulnerable groups of countries, which comprise almost half the international community, are met. Consequently, international assistance should give special attention to those vulnerable groups if the Goals are to be attained by 2015.

The General Assembly has given the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States the important mandate of monitoring the integrated and coordinated follow-up of implementation of the aforementioned programmes of action. That Office should therefore be actively involved in, and duly contribute to, the Millennium Development Goals review process in the interest of those three vulnerable groups. Its primary task should be to establish linkages between the Goals and commitment to those programmes of action and to indicate the ways and means to achieve them.

Let me also touch upon the issue of market access, to which our Group — the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries — attaches great importance. We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to ask developed countries to commit themselves this year to completing the Doha round of trade negotiations not later than 2006 and, as a first step, to give immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all exports from least developed countries.

As the Assembly is aware, for landlocked developing countries, market access is no less critical for addressing their special development needs and overcoming the impediments of geography that prevent them from being competitive in the global trading system and from integrating into the global economy. The Almaty Programme of Action, the São Paulo Consensus and General Assembly resolutions have all recognized the need for the trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization to give particular attention to landlocked developing countries' products of special interest. It is of particular importance that resolution 59/245, of 22 December 2004, called for the Doha work programme to consider including landlocked developing countries as part of the group of small and vulnerable economies under the category of small economies. In that regard, we, the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, request that that specific and urgent need of landlocked developing countries be given due attention and consideration.

Against that backdrop, I would like to invite the President to undertake the necessary measures to ensure that the special needs of the most vulnerable segment of the international community be fully addressed during the September high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals and be reflected in the summit outcome, as called for in resolution 59/245. We are certain that the ongoing consultations, including on the issue of global socio-economic development, will contribute to turning the report into a complete set of recommendations to the 2005 high-level plenary meeting. The Group of Landlocked Developing Countries stands ready to make every possible contribution to that process in order to advance its legitimate cause of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to continue our exchange of views on all aspects of United Nations reform. We would also like to commend you for presenting us with a detailed timetable for our work on the four clusters, with the facilitators you appointed, thus making full use of the remaining time until the summit in September 2005.

Today we are invited to discuss the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by

Ambassador Jean-Marc Hoscheit, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg. Let me stress that we particularly share the sentiment of gratitude to the Secretary-General for his bold and comprehensive approach to the reform agenda.

In his report the Secretary-General addresses interconnected challenges and threats and suggests that a piecemeal, fragmented approach will not bring about the required solutions. He calls on all States and all regions to cooperate in developing the required strategies. While he demands much from all of us, his proposals aim at an outcome in which every region will be able to find gains and advantages.

In addition to the comments made on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Luxembourg, I would like to touch briefly on three points: first, the way forward to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve freedom from want; secondly, the need to strengthen the rule of law as a prerequisite for the freedom to live in dignity; and, thirdly, the need for Security Council reform. We have had occasion to express our views on the latter topic in previous debates, and we also discussed it with a good part of the membership in an event we organized together with Brazil, India and Japan last week. I am therefore sure, Sir, that you would feel that a national statement by Germany on reform issues would be incomplete without a few words on the Security Council.

In his report the Secretary-General stresses the importance of development as an issue in its own right and also reminds us of the link between security and development. He rightly calls on both developing countries and donor countries to do their part for development. Bilaterally as well as in the framework of the European Union, Germany is constantly increasing its efforts to meet that responsibility. The German Government's response to the tsunami catastrophe — for which it pledged more than $650 million, plus another $650 million in private donations — and Germany's commitment to the goals of the President Lula's September 2004 summit on fighting poverty and hunger are precisely examples of such efforts.

We know that more will have to be done to achieve the commitments of Monterrey and to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income in official development assistance (ODA). The German Chancellor and the Foreign Minister have recently announced a road map for the timely implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. By increasing its official development assistance to 0.35 per cent in 2006, and to 0.5 per cent in 2010, Germany will achieve the 0.7 per cent target in three steps by 2014. As we have a very large economy, that involves tens of billions of dollars in additional assistance.

Germany has also indicated that we are sympathetic to the proposal to establish an International Finance Facility. We intend to free up resources for development — particularly in Africa — by rescheduling and easing the debt burden of developing countries.

With regard to the rule of law, we agree fully with the Secretary-General's view that the rule of law is the essential foundation for political stability, social progress and sustained development. Nobody will invest in an economy, a society or a State if there is no rule of law and no respect for basic human rights. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to create a dedicated Rule of Law Assistance Unit in the proposed Peacebuilding Support Office to assist national efforts to re-establish the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict societies. That proposal is very much in line with an initiative by Jordan, Finland and Germany that was submitted some months ago to the Secretary-General. We feel that it should be implemented as soon as possible, even independently of a decision on the Peacebuilding Commission, which we support.

With regard to Security Council reform, I want to make two points. First, the time for that reform is ripe. In his report the Secretary-General stresses that Member States should reach a decision on that important issue before September. The reform momentum must be used. Let us not fool ourselves: everybody knows that consensus on that complex issue is not possible. The Secretary-General is therefore right when he says that consensus might be desirable but that its absence should not be taken as a pretext for inaction. The Charter itself supports that view in Article 108, which provides for a two-thirds majority vote for changes to the Charter. In my view, to pretend that such a vote is divisive or undemocratic reveals a strange understanding of democracy, because taking decisions through a vote is the daily business of all democratic parliaments. And let us further not fool ourselves: if we miss this chance for reform, it will not come back in the coming decades. If we do not heed the Secretary-General's advice to decide before September, that will notably cast a shadow on the September summit, because the public perception in all our countries will be that we have not addressed one of the major reform issues. Another postponement of a decision, after 12 years of discussion, will mean the failure of our efforts. Our position is clear: we are working on a draft resolution on reform that should be put to the vote in May or June.

Secondly, the elements for a solution are on the table. After discussion of the proposals of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) in several General Assembly debates, there is a clear trend in favour of an enlargement of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent seats, with some modifications to the proposed model A. One modification that enjoys broad support — including ours — is to maintain the existing regional groups. Concerning the category of non-permanent seats, that issue has been touched upon by several delegations. We favour an increase in seats for Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Latin American and Caribbean States.

We remain open to ideas on many of the reform issues. But we will not make false compromises in order to accommodate the very specific national interests of a very few. Only enlargement in both categories will bring about the structural change of the Security Council needed to reflect today's geopolitical realities and to strengthen the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. The Security Council has to become not only more effective and more representative, but also more transparent and more inclusive in its working methods. Reform of working methods will therefore an integral part of our reform project. We would like to encourage and invite Member States to continue the dialogue with the group of countries composed of Brazil, India, Japan and Germany and to work with the facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly to make the Security Council more representative, more transparent and more responsive to today's challenges.

Let me conclude by saying that we should create the necessary building blocks for the implementation of the report of the Millennium Project — the Sachs report — and the report of the High-level Panel as condensed in the recommendations of the Secretary-General, which combine the desirable with the feasible. We lend our full support to the President of the General Assembly, to the facilitators and, last but not least, to the Secretary-General. Supporting their efforts will make the summit the success the United Nations needs and deserves.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome the reform report (A/59/2005) before the General Assembly and approach it on the basis of the conviction that the recognition of the links among all the major topics leads inevitably to having all issues addressed in an outcome document. At the same time, we will continue focusing our national efforts on those areas where we feel we can best make a contribution, namely, human rights, the rule of law and Security Council reform. We very much look forward to the more in-depth work that will be carried out on the four clusters identified by the President.

The September summit will first and foremost be an opportunity to reinvigorate the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, with development issues at its core. The outcome document must therefore include a clear reaffirmation and commitment to the development consensus as agreed upon in Monterrey and Johannesburg and as spelled out in the Millennium Development Goals, on the basis of concrete agreed steps to achieve those goals. Both developed and developing countries must step up their efforts to fulfil their respective responsibilities.

For us developed countries that means significantly stepping up our official development assistance (ODA) and establishing timetables to reach the agreed ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. Concrete measures are needed to fight extreme poverty, foster sustainable debt relief, open up markets, promote gender equality, fight major diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, act against climate change and reduce the risks emanating from natural disasters. Only a bold breakthrough in 2005 will save us from missing the opportunity to implement the Millennium Development Goals, enhance global security and save the lives of millions.

Regarding the area of peace and security, we fully endorse the call for a new security consensus. The summit must acknowledge the diversity and interdependence of all security threats and the shared responsibility of all of us for one another's security. The Charter of the United Nations remains the legal framework for our collective action, within which we must commit ourselves to develop and implement comprehensive strategies against those threats and to act on a number of levels.

We must act urgently to implement the Millennium Development Goals, in order to make better progress in eradicating the scourges threatening human security and the lives of millions of people worldwide.

We must revitalize and continue to develop our legal framework for non-proliferation and disarmament, from the whole range of weapons of mass destruction to small arms and light weapons, whose death toll around the world qualifies them as the real weapons of mass destruction.

We should endorse the proposed United Nations counter-terrorism strategy and its comprehensive approach, which includes the defence of human rights in the fight against terrorism. We should commit ourselves to finalizing the work on a comprehensive convention on terrorism in the course of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, and work for the speedy entry into force of the recently adopted draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

We must accept, and act on, our responsibility to protect people everywhere in the world in the event of genocide and other mass atrocities that national Governments are unwilling, or unable, to prevent. We must reaffirm the Charter's provisions on the use of force, including Article 51. That legal framework should be complemented by agreed criteria on the legitimacy of military force, which we understand not to be legally binding, as a means of enhancing the Security Council's accountability to Member States in its decision-making on those topics. Furthermore, we must act on the Secretary-General's recommendations in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in particular the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission.

Protecting the rule of law at the international and national levels and protecting the vulnerable are at the heart of a strong multilateral system. The summit should clearly reaffirm the commitment to the rule of law at both levels, and we must also agree on concrete measures to strengthen the rule of law in the daily work of the United Nations. We should mainstream the concept throughout the United Nations system and start off by ensuring in particular that the United Nations itself respects the concept.

Decisive action is warranted in that respect, from preventing abusive and criminal behaviour by United Nations personnel to ensuring due process and basic standards of humanity for individuals targeted by Security Council sanctions. The summit must result in an unequivocal reaffirmation of the commitment of all Member States to international law and further be seized as an opportunity for States to sign and ratify the most important multilateral treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and other treaties for the protection of civilians.

We welcome the Secretary-General's suggestion that the important role of the International Court of Justice be reaffirmed and that a process be started to strengthen the work of the Court. In addition to practical measures, Liechtenstein would particularly welcome increased recourse to the advisory function of the Court, including through referrals by the Secretary-General.

The success of our actions on almost all of the issues I have mentioned is linked to the efficiency and legitimacy of the United Nations bodies dealing with them. All the main organs of the United Nations require major reform efforts. While many believe that United Nations reform cannot be complete without Security Council reform, it needs to be emphasized also that United Nations reform cannot be complete without General Assembly reform.

We welcome the bold recommendation to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a Human Rights Council. The summit should make a decision in principle on this important question and establish a process, including a timetable, which will clarify the details of such a new body, including its mandate, modalities for elections, and its relationship with other organs.

We were glad to hear that the Secretary-General expressed the same view on the process when he addressed the Commission on Human Rights today in Geneva. In our view, the council should be a principal organ of the United Nations, and its size and modalities for election should allow for a diverse membership representing the whole range of Member States, small and large. The council should become the main forum for human rights discussions and replace, not duplicate, the respective work of the General Assembly. To end duplication must be one of our primary goals in this area, whatever the final institutional structure, as we outlined in our national proposal on the reform of the intergovernmental human rights bodies. We fully agree that the council should be in session throughout the year in order to be able to respond quickly to emergencies.

On the reform of the Security Council, we reiterate the need for a comprehensive reform, with strong emphasis given to a substantial outcome on the working methods of the Council. A larger Council will not, in itself, be a better Council, and many of the aspects of the work of the Council under discussion are related to its working methods. We also continue to believe that the membership should remain open-minded vis-à-vis enlargement models that go beyond those contained in the report submitted by the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly needs another major overhaul in order to be restored to its rightful place, as enunciated in the Millennium Declaration. Practical measures — and they have been on the table for a long time — are important to that end. But the decisive element is the resolve of States to use this organ of the Organization in a manner consistent with the role given to it under the Charter.

Finally, we support the Secretary-General's proposal on the strengthening of the Secretariat. Increased authority and flexibility for the Secretary-General to manage his staff and operations must go hand in hand with strengthened management practices and accountability in particular. Member States should work determinedly with the Secretary-General to improve budget and human resource rules in order to better tailor them to the needs of the Organization.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Mr. President, like so many colleagues before me, I should like to start by gratefully expressing our appreciation for the thoughtful report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom". I should like also to voice our appreciation of the manner in which you are handling the organization of our important work based on that report. Furthermore, we highly appreciate the work of the facilitators you appointed.

Iceland has on a number of occasions stressed its commitment to the process set in train by the Secretary-General with the establishment of the High-level Panel and the mandating of the Millennium Project. The Secretary-General's incisive and comprehensive report is indeed the culmination of a vital initial phase of preparing the groundwork for heads of State to address the key issues of world poverty and security, and of how the multilateral system can best help tackle those challenges in future.

We fully support the central tenets of the Secretary-General's report — that development, security and human rights are inextricably linked. While Iceland will return to the relevant chapters with more detailed comments in forthcoming debates, I would like to highlight one or two issues at this juncture.

Development is a shared responsibility of the developing and developed countries, and the report makes that very clear. But progress can be achieved only if countries themselves take the lead for their own development. The emphasis on Africa is also particularly welcome. Iceland aims to double its development aid by 2009 and has concentrated the bulk of its bilateral development efforts on Africa.

Iceland also supports the emphasis on an open and equitable trade system to allow developing countries to take a full part in the globalized economy.

I would like to praise in particular the contribution which the Secretary-General makes to the establishment of a security consensus, the core of which is the interdependence of all States in addressing threats to our security, be they in the form of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, disease, environmental degradation or poverty.

I would also like to praise the proposal for a definition of terrorism. Such a definition will certainly facilitate the struggle against this global menace.

Iceland fully supports the strong emphasis on the role of human dignity — comprising human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We also agree that, in order to ensure human dignity, we must be ready to embrace the responsibility to protect and to provide the judicial mechanisms — particularly the International Criminal Court and other regional courts with international mandates — to punish those who offend against human dignity.

The Secretary-General has made some bold proposals for the reform and reinvigoration of the United Nations. Iceland will lend its active support to pushing forward those proposals with the aim of making the United Nations an Organization which can continue to be the nexus of the multilateral system.

Iceland looks forward to a constructive, open and forward-looking discussion and will do its utmost to contribute to the making of far-reaching and effective changes on the basis of the excellent preparatory work carried out under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUUAM).

The GUUAM Group welcomes the submission by the Secretary-General of his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). The report is a highly important contribution to the ongoing process of preparing for the United Nations summit in September. We agree with its approach regarding the need to address and take action in the three priority and interlinked areas of development, security and human rights and to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing those priorities.

The report's package of proposals and recommendations for decisions by heads of State or Government, although not exhaustive, could be considered as the basis for our further substantive and target-oriented work. However — as is probably the case with every other delegation in this Hall — we must note that the report does not fully reflect the views and concerns expressed by the GUUAM Group and its member States during previous informal debates on a number of issues, including Security Council expansion, the need to address the specific concerns of countries with economies in transition and the problem of human trafficking.

While the report is being thoroughly studied in our capitals, and in anticipation of the detailed discussions to be held on the various clusters of issues in the coming weeks and months, I would like to make several comments at this Assembly meeting.

We support the call for placing the Millennium Development Goals at the core of national development strategies tailored to local realities. Respect for human rights, a vibrant civil society, an entrepreneurial private sector and good governance at all levels are essential if those strategies are to be implemented. In the meantime, we highlight the importance of a balanced approach in reviewing the roles and responsibilities as well as the commitments and contributions of all stakeholders in this process.

We strongly believe that, as provided for by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the specialized agencies, regional commissions and international financial institutions should continue to provide assistance to economies in transition to ensure that they are fully and effectively integrated into the world economy. The success stories of some transitional economies do not guarantee sustained development for all such economies.

The GUUAM Group welcomes the attention devoted in the report to fighting HIV/AIDS and other diseases in the most harshly affected regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. We also emphasize the need for a renewed focus on those countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus that have recently experienced the steepest rise in the spread of HIV. Recognizing that a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS requires long-term and sustainable financial resources, we call upon international donors to live up to their commitments to replenish the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The GUUAM Group expresses its support for the new vision of collective security that addresses the security concerns of all States: a threat to one is a threat to all. We believe that that approach could bridge the existing gap between divergent views on the issue of security.

We fully agree that there is a need to revitalize the multilateral frameworks for handling the threats posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and to restore confidence in the multilateral mechanisms for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Disarmament and non-proliferation are interconnected, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons. Progress in both areas is urgently required. Therefore, the GUUAM Group calls for more active use of existing initiatives aimed at preventing the illicit trafficking of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and of their means of delivery. The role of the Security Council in that regard is extremely important.

The challenge of combating terrorism requires sustained, long-term and global action. Therefore, we welcome the presentation by the Secretary-General of a comprehensive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy. We are of the view that the promotion of closer cooperation and coordination with international, regional and subregional organizations should be an essential part of such a strategy. The GUUAM Group hopes that the proposed elements of a definition of terrorism could facilitate the conclusion of work on a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

As was argued in the recent report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565), the use of force is a vital component of any workable system of collective security. The GUUAM Group considers that the United Nations Charter clearly prohibits the threat or use of force against any State except in the exercise of the inherent right of self-defence, as reflected in Article 51, and in carrying out measures authorized by the Security Council. Therefore, we agree that it is important to define and adopt criteria for the legitimate authorization by the Council of the use of force. Situations in which national authorities are unwilling or unable to protect their populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity may require effective action by the international community in accordance with international law, including enforcement measures in exceptional circumstances. We believe that such measures can be taken only as a last resort and under the explicit mandate of the Security Council.

We do not believe that the recommendations put forward in the Secretary-General's report with regard to institutional reform in the area of human rights offer a magical solution to all our problems; nor, in fact, were they intended to do so. But we certainly believe that they offer a good point of departure for the creative and innovative measures that are needed to reinvigorate the human rights machinery of the United Nations. We fully support the idea of further mainstreaming human rights into the overall activities of the United Nations system. In that regard, we are looking forward to further details regarding the establishment and functioning of a Human Rights Council, as proposed by the High-level Panel, together with further details concerning the mandate of such a body, its membership and its relationship to other United Nations institutions.

In the same vein, we believe that the idea of creating a Democracy Fund at the United Nations to provide funding and technical assistance to countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democracy deserves to be considered positively by Member States. We also take a positive view of the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission in order to fill the existing institutional vacuum in that very important area. We look forward to further details and discussion on that issue.

The GUUAM Group associate itself with the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States on the issue of the reform of the Security Council. The allocation of at least one additional non-permanent seat to the Eastern European Group, whose composition has more than doubled in the last 15 years, is an important precondition for our support of any reform proposal. We appreciate very much the statement made today by the representative of Germany, in which he clearly supported the position of the Eastern European States. In line with the position of the Secretary-General, we call for greater involvement in the Security Council's decision-making process by those countries contributing most to the Organization in military, diplomatic and financial terms.

GUUAM member States agree that the enlargement of the Security Council should go hand in hand with the reform of its working methods, in order to increase its efficiency and transparency and to strengthen the democratic and accountable nature of that body. It is also important to ensure that the activities of the Security Council are relevant to the concerns of Member States, and that its decisions are implemented.

As has been mentioned on several occasions, reform of the United Nations should of course not be limited to the enlargement of the Security Council. We therefore fully agree that there is a need to revitalize the activities of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative body of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively. It is also important to strengthen and enhance the relevancy of the Economic and Social Council.

Last but not least, the GUUAM Group fully agrees with the Secretary-General when he points out, in the introduction to his report that "none of the proposals advanced [in the report] obviate the need for urgent action this year to make progress in resolving protracted conflicts that threaten regional and global stability" (*ibid., para. 5*). That should be done on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, in particular the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States.

People all over the world hope that at the September summit our leaders will be able to breathe new life into the United Nations and to adopt a package of far-reaching decisions aimed at strengthening collective action in response to worldwide challenges. It is now the responsibility of us, the Member States, to mobilize our efforts in order to ensure that those expectations are met. You, Mr. President, may count on the full support and cooperation of GUUAM member States in your noble efforts to achieve tangible results during the coming months.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for providing us with a procedural framework and a clear road map for our exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representatives of Jamaica and Malaysia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), respectively, as well as with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States. I shall therefore limit myself to commenting on some issues that we consider significant in view of the observations and recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General, which, as previous speakers have already mentioned, contains bold and innovative ideas. We thank the Secretary-General for that far-reaching and important report.

The Secretary-General's report provides us with analysis and recommendations for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It concludes that the Goals are achievable within the agreed time frame, provided that Member States engage and that they identify economic cooperation within a global partnership.

My delegation acknowledges the recognition of the principle of national ownership with regard to identifying and establishing development priorities at the national level through programmes, plans and strategies. Those represent the framework for national action and must be adequately supported by the international community. Part and parcel of international support for action on national priorities includes meaningful measures on means for implementation, in particular those related to commitments made but not honoured, reform of the trade regime and debt relief.

The lessons we have learned from our own experience lead us to conclude that achieving the Millennium Development Goals poses specific challenges to countries emerging from conflict. The devastation and destruction brought about by the prevalence of armed conflict broadens and enlarges the scope for national and international action. Furthermore, the prevalence of peace creates an opportunity for a turning point, an opportunity that can be seized thought capital-intensive programmes for the social and economic infrastructure needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to sustain peace.

A different, yet fundamental, set of challenges affect least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries. Geography, nature and income impair the ability of those countries to achieve the agreed development goals, as recognized in the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and expanded upon in the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Programme of Action and, more recently, the Mauritius Strategy. Those represent agreed frameworks for international cooperation, but lack meaningful implementation. Reforming the Organization must therefore strengthen its ability to foster international cooperation so that humankind can enjoy development and security.

Furthermore, it is clear from the Secretary-General's report that the external debt burden is having an adverse effect on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and that Africa's debt, in particular, is unsustainable. Debt servicing diverts resources from development, contributing to the net transfer of resources from the poor to the rich. To reverse this trend, the international community must address debt sustainability in highly indebted and low-income countries, particularly in Africa.

We agree fully with the Secretary-General's assessment that there is a need for a new international consensus on the future of collective security. In this context, in his report the Secretary-General raised important questions and made interesting and far-reaching observations and recommendations. However, we are of the view that much more needs to be done in order to overcome institutional weaknesses in dealing with such issues.

Turning to institutional reforms, let me say that we consider that the General Assembly's authority and role under the Charter must be effectively restored. We therefore stress the importance of resolution 58/126, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

The proposal to create a new Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights certainly needs further consideration. However, whatever decision is taken regarding the size, nature, mandate and location of such a council, we are of the view that the system of independent human rights experts and rapporteurs, who make an exceptional contribution to the advancement of the economic, social and cultural perspectives of human rights, should be maintained.

Much has been said about the self-evident reality that peace and development are mutually reinforcing. Paragraph 263 of the report of the High-level Panel (A/59/565) recommends that the Security Council, acting under article 29 of the Charter and after consultations with the Economic and Social Council, establish a Peacebuilding Commission. Furthermore, paragraphs 264 and 265 provide us with some ideas about the core functions, size and membership of such a commission.

While the Secretary-General has not mentioned whether or not the Peacebuilding Commission will take advantage of the decision-making process of the Security Council, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, whose central role should be to support national efforts for post-conflict reconstruction and economic and social rehabilitation.

Finally, on Security Council reform, let me say that African countries have long urged the expansion of the Security Council in order to make it more representative and to enhance its transparency and inclusiveness. The Ezulwini Consensus is clear in this regard. However, if, for whatever reason, we are not able to reach consensus, that must not become a justification for deferring action on the very purpose of the September summit: the achievement of meaningful progress and measures to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, let me say that we believe that the Secretary-General's report, "In larger freedom", based on the report of High-level Panel, and the report of the United Nations Millennium Project, represent a far-reaching step forward in identifying core issues to place before our leaders in September.

We look forward to engaging in further dialogue in such meetings, and to working with the facilitators that you, Mr. President, have appointed. Finally, I would like to say that we are, indeed, very appreciative of the transparent and inclusive way in which you are conducting these important consultations.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing the condolences of the people and the Government of Indonesia to the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who died last week. In addition to being a spiritual leader, Pope John Paul II was a prominent figure in the advancement of peace and of understanding among people of different backgrounds. We join other delegations in praying for the repose of his soul. We would also like to express our condolences to the people and the Government of the Principality of Monaco on the passing this week of Prince Rainier III.

My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important series of meetings to prepare for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to take place in September 2005. We thank the Secretary-General for his report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

Let me state at the outset that my delegation subscribes to the statements made earlier by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation shares the view that the report before us does not sufficiently acknowledge the positions of those two bodies, to which we belong. We will go into greater detail with regard to our positions during the second stage of these discussions, which you, Sir, have proposed that we carry out in thematic clusters later this month.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a wide assortment of positions and recommendations capable of changing the character of the United Nations and improving the lives of the peoples of the world in a fundamental way. In this regard, we are grateful to him for his observation that, in the twenty-first century, States and their collective institutions must advance the cause of larger freedom by ensuring freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity.

It is of great significance that he stresses the relationship between development and security quite plainly, stating that

> "There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both development and security also depend on respect for human rights and the rule of law". (*A/59/2005, annex, para. 2*)

That balance must be respected and maintained. It is also significant that the Secretary-General stresses the importance of multilateralism:

> "No State can stand wholly alone in today's world. We all share responsibility for each other's development and security. Collective strategies, collective institutions and collective action are indispensable". (*Ibid., para. 3*)

We are further pleased at a number of recommendations and proposals that the Secretary-General makes in the report with a view to accomplishing this vision, although we have reservations about a number of them and look forward to receiving clarifications on them. I will devote the rest of my statement to some issues under specific clusters.

My delegation admits to a measure of disappointment with some of the contents of the report in terms of the measures for achieving this vision. In the broader outlook, while we do not deny the legitimacy of the issues raised, we believe that more space and greater emphasis should have been given to the development concerns of the developing countries on their merits. Presenting those concerns within a security framework has served to underline security as the priority issue. For developing countries, development is the sure foundation upon which lasting peace and security rest, and it should be pointed out that there is no Millennium Development Goal that directly and explicitly focuses on security.

I wish to point out that achieving internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, demands that we commit ourselves to creating a conducive environment at the national and international levels that would pull together the necessary financial resources to pursue such a commitment. We have actually taken two very crucial steps forward: determining the specific actions that need to be taken and identifying the tools needed to realize those actions through the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation outlines the key actions crucial to development that need urgent attention. The Plan's comprehensiveness merits our acknowledgement that it should be our principal guide for development financing. The Monterrey Consensus outlines the tools that can transform the Plan of Implementation into concrete results. Those commitments, along with the Millennium Declaration, embody a fully funded, comprehensive development agenda.

However, we would argue that attaching significance only to the MDGs is similar to giving attention to specific trees rather than focusing on the entire forest. We therefore believe that the MDGs should not be treated as the full embodiment of development, which incorporates much wider issues such as the systemic inequity of the international financial architecture and the use of tariffs to frustrate the will of developing countries to engage in international trade. Those commitments were made in good faith and must be honoured by implementation. To ignore those commitments would undermine the credibility and reliability of the international negotiating process. Indonesia is therefore concerned about the new heavy emphasis being placed on developing countries assuming greater responsibility for their own development, as if to suggest that they are immune from the impact of the global community in pursuing that goal.

That all developing countries should commit themselves to national development strategies, as proposed by the report, and mobilize their domestic resources to meet development goals, especially the MDGs, cannot be contradicted. However, possession of resources will determine the nature of the plans formulated to implement the MDGs. Without available resources for implementation, development plans are reduced to mere wish lists.

Indeed, all signs clearly indicate that developing countries have already begun to assume greater responsibility for their own development based on national and international realities. The request for them to commit now to national strategies to achieve the MDGs by 2015 is thus to urge them to continue going in the direction in which they are going. However, some developing countries — in particular the heavily indebted poor countries — face severe limitations with regard to the mobilization of resources necessary for their own development. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to endorse the Secretary-General's position concerning the need to complete the Doha round and the compelling need to discharge that development promise.

While developing countries agree that domestic resources need to be mobilized as much as possible, it is also important that developed countries promote international trade in the interest of development, increase official development assistance (ODA) and work towards sustainable debt financing and external debt relief. Indonesia will certainly present its views and proposals regarding those issues in more concrete terms during the thematic discussions.

Indonesia would like once again to express its gratitude to the international community for its support following the recent natural disasters in our country, namely, the earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 and the earthquake we experienced in Nias Island just over a week ago. In that connection, we would like to declare our support for the Secretary-General's recommendation for an early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and regional capacity.

With reference to the cluster entitled "Freedom from fear", contrary to our expectations, the report takes some positions that we feel ought to have been more balanced. We believe, for instance, that its definition of nuclear proliferation, which focuses on the general spread of nuclear weapons while avoiding the more critical issue of vertical proliferation and qualitative development, is difficult to comprehend. My delegation would like to stress that nuclear-weapon States should fully implement their commitments and obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the 13 practical steps, with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Turning to the subject of terrorism, and speaking as a nation that has twice been victimized by it, we fully support every effort to combat it. However, we find a definition that ignores the legitimate struggle of peoples who are under colonialism or foreign occupation to be limited in its understanding. We support a counter-terrorism strategy by which that scourge would be attacked at the root level. We also feel that the time is now ripe for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on terrorism on the basis of the views that have been expressed by Member States. The conclusion of the draft convention on nuclear terrorism earlier this month by the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 provides momentum for consensus on the definition of terrorism, provided that States are willing to demonstrate flexibility.

We have stated that we are favourably disposed to the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission to assume post-conflict responsibilities. We feel that that is an important idea that deserves careful consideration. We look forward to further work on its implementation.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General in urging that heads of State or Government recommit to supporting the rule of law, human rights and democracy. We hold the rule of law to be a fundamental United Nations principle. There is need to strengthen existing international norms and rules, as well as the implementation of treaties and conventions.

With reference to the "responsibility to protect", it is our view that, although there are some moral justifications for the Secretary-General's recommendation in that regard, we feel that a number of political and legal questions remain to be addressed.

We have similar concerns relating to the recommendation concerning the use of force. We will be presenting a more elaborate analysis of our position on that topic too during the thematic stage of these deliberations, later in the month. For now, let me say that, with reference to Article 51 of the Charter, it is the position of Indonesia that great care must be taken to avoid any rewriting or reinterpretation of that article.

We support the commitment of the Secretary-General with regard to strengthening the United Nations. However, we would like to reiterate that reform of the Organization must be seen as a process and undertaken as a systemic exercise, and must never assume the form solely of the reform of the Security Council. Institutional or systemic reform means that the exercise must be implemented not as a selective, segmented undertaking, but must include all the principal organs of the Organization.

With reference to the Security Council itself, we are not convinced that all the options for its restructuring have been exhausted. Furthermore, it is important to say that there is still a need to improve the working methods of the Council to make it more transparent, inclusive and effective. The reforms must also strengthen multilateralism.

Turning to the Economic and Social Council, it is our view that the important role of that body in dealing with security challenges having economic causes has been overlooked. There is need to rescue the Economic and Social Council from the passive role it has been forced to play in recent times when compared with the vigorous roles of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in the economic and financial fields. Such limitations on the Economic and Social Council are not consistent with its Charter mandate. We believe that the Council serves as a democratic safeguard for proper decision-making in those fields. Its role should therefore be expanded and centralized, not undermined.

The report also proposes the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a Human Rights Council characterized by limited and selective membership. We are uncertain that that proposal addresses the various controversial issues concerning human rights in the Organization, and we look forward to discussing it further.

With reference to the proposals relating to the reform of the Secretariat, we believe that a lot of questions have yet to be answered, and we look forward to clarifications in that regard.

Finally, Mr. President, let me once again express my delegation's support for your commitment and leadership as we prepare for next September's high-level plenary meeting. We recognize that this will be a challenging five-month period, and we pledge our support and complete participation. We hope that our undertakings within this period will re-energize the United Nations and its membership in support of the Charter and the Millennium Declaration.

One point, however, must be clear. What is at stake here is the future of the peoples of the world, which look to the United Nations for direction and trust in its leadership. It is important that the outcome document that the leaders will sign next September not only be bold and strong but also represent the clear views of Member States and the yearnings of their peoples.

The report, specifically the annex of recommendations with which it ends, also creates the impression that September is the deadline for action on its contents. We would urge instead that the report be seen and treated as a comprehensive and balanced package and as a useful beginning to the process of change and consensus-building aimed at facilitating the implementation of the outcome of the Millennium Declaration, which emphasizes development, especially poverty eradication. There is therefore a need for deadline flexibility, so that immediate action can be taken on those matters that enjoy widespread support and in order to allow time for the review of controversial proposals that do not enjoy consensus or agreement.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to thank you for your efforts to hold consultations with United Nations Member States in accordance with the road map. Kazakhstan reaffirms its readiness to be actively involved in these consultations, which are designed to reach agreement on the decisions to be adopted at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005. We also support the Secretary-General's initiative to appoint four envoys to ensure full-scale and high-quality preparations for the historic United Nations summit.

Kazakhstan welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all". The report contains a comprehensive programme for the restructuring of the system of international relations and of the United Nations itself. In our view, it has laid the foundation for a comprehensive package of decisions to ensure international peace and security, achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and carry out an institutional reform of the United Nations. The document lists practical recommendations to enhance efforts relating to the triad of development, freedom and peace.

Kazakhstan shares the view that there is an inextricable link between these three contemporary objectives. Yet we have to emphasize that the framework for collective security, peace, and the freedom to live in dignity can be established only by creating conditions for the development of States.

Issues of development and related challenges involving the timely and effective achievement of the Millennium Development Goals should continue to be the focus of attention on the part of the international community. We believe that the summit to be convened in September 2005 in New York should reaffirm the thrust and significance of the final documents of the major multilateral forums and conferences held in Monterrey and Johannesburg, as well as in Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius.

As a landlocked country, Kazakhstan encourages the full consideration of the interests of that category of countries. In that context, we call for the unconditional implementation of the 2003 Almaty Programme of Action, as it relates to decision-making in the area of economic development, international trade and interregional cooperation.

Economic and social development constitutes a key element of a preventive approach to collective security involving the development of an integrated United Nations strategy of response to emerging crisis situations.

Kazakhstan welcomes the initiative to introduce a counter-terrorism strategy that provides for the elimination of the causes of terrorism and its renunciation as a tactical means of attracting political attention. The success of that strategy will depend largely on the strengthening of international, regional and subregional cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and on the growing role of regional organizations in dealing with this evil. However, building the capacity of States to prevent terrorist operations and recruitment by terrorists is the most effective element of a comprehensive strategy.

Kazakhstan calls for an early agreement on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism in order to develop further an integrated legal mechanism to counter international terrorism. We welcome the completion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 aimed at drafting and preparing for the adoption of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

We would like to note the timeliness of the recommendation concerning the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission's main task should be to prevent the recurrence of any situation in which the lack of a peacebuilding strategy leads to an escalation of internal conflicts and to States' losing further their capacity to perform, in an effective and responsible way, their sovereign functions. That Commission should report to the Security Council or to the Economic and Social Council, depending on the stage that a given conflict has reached.

Kazakhstan believes also that the decision to use force to safeguard international peace and security should be taken as a last resort and be based on reliable and objective information.

We would like to stress the relevance of the provision concerning the need to reaffirm Member States' commitment to the United Nations Charter in order successfully to meet the full range of challenges involving security, economic and social development, and the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations and its principal organs and agencies.

We share the view that it would be a mistake to treat human rights as though there were a trade-off to be made between them and such goals as security or development. In that context, comprehensive compliance by all countries with multilateral human rights treaties and the adaptation of domestic legislation to existing international standards in this area are key factors in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Secretary-General's proposal to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a standing Human Rights Council, as a principal organ of the United Nations or subsidiary body of the General Assembly, needs, in our view, further in-depth study.

Kazakhstan believes that the reform of the three principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — in order to ensure a balance in their work and their mutual strengthening, is a matter of principle. The General Assembly should have a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan has repeatedly voiced its continued support for the expansion of the Security Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and of respect for the sovereign equality of States.

It would be preferable for Kazakhstan, as it would for many other States, if consensus on Security Council reform were reached before the summit in September 2005. We believe also that attention must be paid to the Secretary-General's view that inability to reach consensus must not become an excuse for postponing this important action.

It will not be possible to implement all the recommendations contained in the report without a competent and professional Secretariat. The Secretariat should be staffed with the people who are the most suited to performing the tasks at hand. In that regard, it is very important to ensure that the measures taken to strengthen the Secretariat achieve their main goal: improving efficiency.

The world's leaders will come to New York in September to make momentous decisions regarding the most far-reaching reforms in the entire history of the United Nations. The ability of our Organization to respond effectively to global challenges and threats depends on our preparing the relevant recommendations for our leaders. Despite the criticism of the United Nations, Kazakhstan, like other States, places in the Organization all its hopes for achieving stability in the world and a just world order based on universally recognized norms.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): I join other delegations in expressing my appreciation and thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening these meetings of the General Assembly for an exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). We commend the Secretary-General for submitting the report, which sets out a road map for our deliberations on the reform of the United Nations.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the delegation of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the delegation of Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

We believe that the report of the Secretary-General provides us with a good basis for the comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of all commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals, and the global partnership required for their achievement.

We noted with interest the Secretary-General's approach, which gives equal attention to the development, security and human rights aspects of the reform. We firmly believe that there can be no lasting peace or true collective security in our global society as long as extreme poverty and unprecedented affluence exist side by side. The report of the Secretary-General outlines a valuable strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by providing a time line for achieving the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income, by completing the World Trade Organization's Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations and by cancelling 100 per cent of the debt of most heavily indebted poor countries. The innovative idea of launching in 2005 an International Finance Facility to support an immediate front-loading of official development assistance is also noteworthy.

However, we note with concern that some important proposals and recommendations of the Millennium Project report and the views that the African Union Council of Ministers submitted to the Secretary-General were not substantially integrated into the report. We also feel that the special conditions of Africa and the least developed countries have not been significantly reflected in the report. The timely implementation of the MDGs is imperative in sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of the countries are least developed countries, and which remains the centre of extreme poverty.

We concur with the notion that security threats are interconnected. We firmly believe that they could be effectively checked, arrested or eliminated through cooperative action. To strengthen our collective security there is a need for sustained interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the African Union. To that end, a mechanism should be designed for continued logistic and financial support to a pan-African peace strategy, which would comprise an African standby force, a continent-wide early warning system, a mediation unit and a post-conflict reconstruction programme. In that regard, my delegation supports the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report to support the African Union in establishing an African standby force.

We believe that the United Nations has a special responsibility to promote and develop a comprehensive strategy for combating terrorism. We also acknowledge the centrality of international cooperation and the need to build partnerships in the fight against terrorism. The United Nations needs to establish partnerships with regional organizations such as the African Union to ensure a coordinated approach in preventing and combating terrorism. We would also like to underscore the crucial need to strengthen national capacities for preventing and combating terrorism.

The Secretary-General has made some important and pertinent recommendations concerning institutional reform. In that regard, we note the thrust of the recommendations for Security Council reform, in particular the drive to expand the Council and make it a representative body. We hope that during our debate, the issue of greater transparency, accountability and effectiveness will be further explored.

We also recognize the Secretary-General's recommendation to reform the Secretariat and better organize it in order to make it an essential component of an effective system for collective security. We need to consider and act on the recommendations of the Secretary-General in that regard.

The recommendations concerning the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council do not live up to the expectations of the majority of Member States, which have made very pertinent comments and which hope that those main organs will be endowed with the appropriate authority and mechanisms effectively to address identified threats and challenges in general and development issues in particular. We still hope that we can redress the aforementioned shortcomings and restore the General Assembly's role as the most democratic and universal policymaking organ of the United Nations.

As the Economic and Social Council is an essential and principal organ of the United Nation charged with dealing with questions of economic and social development, it would be ironic if we failed to strengthen it at the very time when poverty, disease and environmental degradation are considered to be among the main threats to international peace and security.

We believe that enhancing the effectiveness of the reform of the United Nations will require coordination and synergy among the Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We have observed that regional and subregional organizations in Africa serve as an essential vehicle in the maintenance of peace and security and in the promotion of economic development and social progress. In view of the important role that regional organizations such as the African Union play in the areas of peace, security and development, my delegation hopes that, in accordance with the relevant recommendation, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations will be further strengthened.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to draw the attention of members to the fact that 35 speakers remain on the list. We will be able to finish our work tomorrow if speakers do not take too long in making their statements. I therefore appeal to all those representatives who are due to speak tomorrow to be brief.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.